PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION: ARISTOTLE AND HIS PREDECESSORS

BY

EMMANUEL KOFI ACKAH

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ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

To Akwa Ama who, penurious and unschooled, dedicated her widow's mite to my education.

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Aristotle's theology as expounded in the *Metaphysics* is seen as radically distinct from his predecessors' and farther still from traditional religion. Contributing to this view are three apparently peculiar conceptual features of Aristotle's God: (i) that God is solely a final cause, who moves all other things as being loved or desired; (ii) that God is a self-thinking thinking; (iii) and that God is ontologically separate from the visible cosmos. Since no pre-Aristotelian philosopher has adduced (i)-(iii) in an argument to the existence and nature of God, this prompts the question of how Aristotle's theology stands to preceding thought. Here arose the main motivation for this thesis.

But one could not hope to deal adequately with this question without a full exposition of preceding conceptions of god, traditional or philosophical. Incidentally, the orientation of the question enables us to be apprised of an answer to a prior question - whether the concept of "god" as it occurs in pre-Aristotelian philosophies is religious and theological. An answer to this preliminary question will supply a relevant cultural-historical perspective for the proper evaluation of the relation of Aristotle's God to preceding conceptions of god. This is also a vantage point from which arose a collateral motivation for this thesis: to assess the justification or otherwise of the currency of reading the Presocratics as the putative precursors of modern science who had at most a peripheral interest in religion and theology.

Our preliminary investigation (chapter 1) argues to a hypothetical conclusion, viz., that ancient Greek polytheism contains a *basic* conception of god: god is basically a causal and/or originating power which satisfies a set of basic conditions of divinity; supremacy, self-sufficiency, ideality or perfection, and immortality. Divine causality is presumed to imply life. But these conditions also primarily imply a contrast to the dependency, imperfection and finitude of human life. *A fortiori*, they also imply that the divine is a living reality - although this reality may take a psychic or physical form or it may be a causally conceived condition. And the causal function of divine reality is basically explanatory; it contains a model of explanation according to which the universe or a feature of it is deemed adequately accounted for when its divine origin or cause is traced or specified. Thus "god" is the reality existing necessarily as that which is ultimately presupposed in an account of the universe or a feature of it.

This hypothetical finding is subjected to an attempt at confirmation in the exegeses of pre-Aristotelian philosophies (Presocratics - ch. 2; Socrates - ch. 3; Plato - ch. 4). The theses of the Presocratics will appear as logical-philosophical transpositions of traditional mythological cosmologies, culminating in metaphysical first principles (often called god) which satisfy the basic conditions of divinity. Plato can also be seen in this light. Thus the hypothesis is confirmed throughout these philosophies, with an additional note, that divine causality comes to be expressed, with increasing awareness, as rational motion. The apparent exception to these investigations - the Eleatic philosophy of Being and Socratic ethical philosophy - are, in reality,

continuous with and confirmatory of our hypothesis but in a way: the former is concerned with the formal criteria which a first principle *qua* first principle must satisfy, and these criteria are subsumable under the conditions of divinity; the latter is concerned to fix, by *dialectics*, a permanent desire for *sophia* which is attainable by knowledge of ethical first principles. At the same time *sophia* is the key property of god and is constitutive of *eudaimonia* (divine happiness or spiritual well-being) - the final, non-moral end of a fully realised life. It is implied that divinity and *eudaimonia* are associated with first principles and with their cognition.

Indeed, Plato's Socrates defends himself against the indictment of impiety or atheism and corruption of youth by appeal to his practice of *philo-sophia*, which he represents as a religious duty and service, a command of the god. Thus it is implied that activity cognitive of first principles is our appropriate relation to god. It is religion in the true sense: for this entails a critique of the forms of religion which seek spiritual salvation and happiness by means of initiation, ritual sacrifices, ecstatic catharsis, observances. Thus Socratic first principles play the same explanatory role envisaged in traditional religious thought; viz., they are the divine realities which are ultimately presupposed in an account of a feature of the universe - the ethical-religious phenomena. So while the Presocratics were generally concerned with arguments to the existence of divine first principles and causes of the universe conceived as an orderly system, a cosmos, Socrates was concerned with showing that pursuit of knowledge of first principles itself constitutes religion. For in this pursuit consists *eudaimonia* or attainment of *the good* of life. This apparently rational and

humanistc religion of Socrates and Presocratic philosophy can, therefore, be seen as complimentary; and they culminate in Plato, but with a qualification: Platonic first principles are a system of metaphysical Forms permeated by the Good. Forms are the eternal principles of divine cognition, creativity and care. For humans, activity cognitive or oriented to the cognition of Forms has moral consequences for life here and postmortem.

We found that Aristotle (ch. 5) adopts the religion-theology complementarity of Plato. He too conceives *sophia* or *prōtē philosophia* as activity cognitive of divine first principles, believes that *sophia* is constitutive of divine *eudaimonia* and belongs especially to God, though we may share in it. As in Plato, Aristotelian *sophia* involves rational awareness of our essential self whose objective counterpart is represented by the system of first principles. But from a point of view Aristotle is unlike Socrates and Plato: Aristotelian science basically divides into practical (e.g., ethics and politics) and theoretical (culminating in *sophia*) sciences. This division reflects a basic duality in man's nature. Aristotle analyses man into a set of species-defining properties and capacities; man is a social and political animal, but the chief of his *differentiæ* is reason. A man's life is completely fulfilled when these properties and capacities are fully realised. But *sophia* implies the exercise of theoretic reason and constitutes the realisation of our potential for divine immortality and *eudaimonia*(i.e. a life which is god-like). On the other hand, there is practical reason (*phronēsis*) the exercise of which constitutes the realisation of those species-defining properties and capacities which exist for us *qua* human. *Phronēsis*, however,

does not necessitate *sophia*. Thus for Aristotle, unlike Socrates and Plato, political and ethical life are not essentially and necessarily continuous with the realisation of the specific difference in virtue of which we participate in divinity. But Aristotle thus comes to be different from Plato and Socrates in a way which relates him directly to and more consistently with traditional religion: for the distinction between *sophia* and *phronēsis* is an expressive appreciation of the traditionally percieved disparity between mortal and immortal life, between man and god, and the belief that politics and ethics are not features of divine life.

Theologically, Aristotle argues to the necessary existence of a divine first principle of the cosmos, which, following Anaxagoras and Plato, he stipulates as *Nous*, calls it God, and specifies its causality in terms of motion. Aristotle derives (i) God as a final cause who moves as an object of desire by combining The Good and Reason of Plato. As Plato implies, the Good is, by definition, an object of desire; it is that which all desires, movements or actions anticipate. So it is a final cause. Thus logical consistency requires that if God is The Good, and God's causality is motion, then God moves, at least, as an object of desire. To derive (ii) God as a self-thinking thinking and (iii) God as ontologically separate from the cosmos, Aristotle assumes: (1) God as a living reality who is causally supreme, perfect, self-sufficient, eternal, most honourable (a traditional religious set of conditions of divinity); (2) that Matter or Body is the condition or principle of corruption, imperfection, contingency, evil (i.e., destruction for Aristotle) (This is a Platonic religious assumption which is ultimately Orphic-

Pythagorean). (3) He then derives (ii) and (iii). For if Reason as God is, e.g., self-sufficient, "his" thinking cannot be seen to *depend* on an object of knowledge lying outside "himself". Dependency entails at least lack of (a) self-sufficiency, (b) supremacy, (c) honour. And if God's thinking were cognitive of material forms or principles, this would entail, on God's part, the imperfection, contingency and evil associated with matter. Therefore, (ii) and (iii). We conclude (ch. 6), that the fundamental assumptions and basic elements of Aristotle's theology and religion are adaptations of his philosophical predecessors', and that he differs from these only by being closer to and logically more consistent with traditional religion. This is without prejudice to the acute analytical distinctions and philosophical refinements by which Aristotle transposed preceding thought into his own.

Our conclusions have significant consequences for Greek philosophical scholarship and for the general history of ideas. For we show or confirm that the beginnings of philosophy and science in ancient Greece were not a parthenogenetic event, but an organic growth of the mind fully fertilized and which continued to be fertilized by the logical, metaphysical, and universal elements, but also by other elements which are compatible with logic and reason, in traditional culture and religion.

ONE

INTRODUCTION

1 The issue

My aim in this thesis is two-fold. My first and ostensible aim is to see how Aristotle's theology as expounded in the *Metaphysics*[1] stands in relation to his predecessors, given Aristotle's conception of God as (i) an immutable, immaterial, eternal, final cause (982b5-10)[2], who moves all things as an object of love or desire; (ii) a self-thinking thinking and (iii) an ontologically (rather than conceptually) separate reality (*kechōrismenon ti kai auto kath' hauto*, 1025b3-1026 with 1074b35, 1075a12).[3] Thus characterised, Aristotle distinguishes theology from two other theoretical sciences - mathematics and physics. Mathematics deals with eternal, immutable objects which are separable (*chōriston*) from matter but only as abstractions (*aphaireseis*) -

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1 In this thesis, my account of Aristotle's relation to his predecessors - the Presocratics, Socrates and Plato - will be based *primarily* on the *Metaphysics*. Aristotle summarily assesses the thoughts of his predecessors in book one of the *Metaphysics* which, in all probability, is an introduction to Theology, otherwise called First Philosophy or *Sophia*.

2 In *Meta*. bk. i, Aristotle summarises his predecessors' philosophical systems as mainly materialistic theses which also represent "stammering" and inadequate attempts to formulate his four causes - material, formal, efficient, and final causes. The overall implication in this introductory book of the *Metaphysics* is that properly conceived and formulated, theology is a science of the final cause. This conception of theology is fulfilled in *Meta* xii. Aristotle's "interested" reading of the thoughts of his predecessors has been adequately shown years ago by Cherniss (1935)

3 Aristotle distinguishes between conceptual or logical *and* simple, absolute, physical or ontological separation - between, i.e., *chōriston haplōs*, *chōriston topos*, *chōriston kath' hauto* and *chōriston en logōi*, *chōriston en nosei*. See *Meta*. 1042a31, 1026a18, 1042a29-312, 1077b2-3; *GC* 320b24; *de An*. 413b14-15, 413b27-29, 429a10-11, 431b12-17, 432a20

i.e., with no existence separable and independent of matter (cf. *Post. An.* 81b4-5). Aristotle's picture of mathematical abstraction is one of stripping away sensible features until one arrives at a conception of pure extension and number.[4] The subject-matter of physics are mutable material objects. But insofar as physics is a theoretical study, its objects of knowledge are also in a sense separable (*chōriston*), but only in account or definition (*kata to logon*).[5] But if god is an *immaterial* substance, this *seems* to imply that the Presocratics have no theology. This is in apparent contradiction to the evidence, however fragmentary, on Presocratic thought which contains a high frequency of the occurrence of the word "god" (*theos*)[6] often associated with first principles (*archai*)[7] which have a material form. Nor would Socrates or Plato have a theology[8] if god is a self-thinking

4 *Meta* 1061a28-35; cf. *NE* 1142a16-21. Further on *aphairesis*, see *Post. An* 81b3; *de An.* 403b13-15, 431b12-13, 432a4-6

5 The objects of physical science are described as separable in definition at *Phy.* 193b3-6; cf. 194b12-14, 193b32-34

6 See the word-index in vol. iii of Diels-Kranz (hence DK) (1960)

7 Unless otherwise stated, I shall use "*archē*" to mean "first principle". Its other nuances - cause, source, rule - will be expressed where necessary.

8 Again, in *Meta.* bk. 1, Aristotle sees Socrates as contributing to the pre-Aristotelian interest in formal causation by his insistence on the importance for ethics of accurate universal definitions of the various virtues. From this initial impulse, he claims, arose Plato's theory of Forms, in which the conception of formal cause is hypostatised into a transcendent noumenon. Our exposition of Socratic ethical philosophy will show that it has religious dimensions or grounds as well. My reasons for treating Socrates distinctly from Plato are two; that Socrates, unlike Plato, (a) does not separate forms from their physical instantiations, and (b) does not make soul tripartite and ontologically distinct from body. (a) and (b) characterise the Early Platonic (or Socratic) dialogues. For the periodic distinction between Early, Middle and Late dialogues, I endorse - without argument for lack of space - Vlastos' (1991, pp. 46-47); except that,

thinking who exists in ontological separation from the visible cosmos. Plato's dialogues are full of "god", and his gods are, indeed, immaterial, eternal and immutable. But nowhere does Plato expressly say that god is a self-thinking thinking who exists in absolute, ontological separation from the visible cosmos. Do these characteristics of divine reality set Aristotle apart from his predecessors, by grounding a completely new god and philosophy of religion?

Since Aristotle was not working in a vacuum, his apparently peculiar definition of god raises the issue of how he stands in relation to previous thought on the conception of god. Since this cannot be done without a full elucidation of the preceding conceptions of god, my conclusion is intended to establish my second aim, viz: to see whether scholars are justified who, consciously or not, follow Aristotle in reading pre-Aristotelian thought processes as if they were neatly divisible into philosophy and science on the one hand, and vague poetic and religious feeling on the other. For instance, in Barnes (1982, p.4) we read: 'The significant contrast between the cosmogonies of the Milesians and the stories found in Hesiod's *Theogony* isn't that theology yielded to science, or gods to natural forces, but rather that unargued fables yielded to argued theories, that dogma yielded to reason. Theology and the supernatural may be treated dogmatically or rationally'.[9] One would have thought he implied

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because the *Gorgias* intimates (b) above, I consider it transitional between the Early and Middle. Although largely Socratic, the *Gorgias* (504cff.) also talks of *aretē* as order in the soul, and the myth at the end of the dialogue contains ingredients of a soul whose moral destiny is tied to a disincarnate existence. And these are middle period themes.

[9] Barnes so often contrasts science with theology, though he never really

that Hesiodic theology is not necessarily supplanted by Milesian philosophy or that Milesian philosophy is rational, in contrast to dogmatic Hesiodic, theology. But he writes near the end of his chapter on Xenophanes: 'It would not take a very ardent scepticism to conclude that the Milesians had no theology at all'. He also says of Thales' *psuchē*, 'Instead of "soul", then, I propose the term "animator", as a translation of *psuchē*. I prefer the comic overtones of "animator" to the theological undertones of "soul"' (p.7). Surely the translation of *psuchē* as "soul" is not desirable here, given possible Cartesian or Platonic connotations. However, Barnes chooses "animator" for *psuchē* in order to avoid theological implications. Is he right? In a recent book the author, Merrill Ring (1987), writes: 'Thales as opposed to Hesiod talked in *naturalistic* terms; that is, he offered natural explanation of the universe, whereas Hesiod employed quasi-personal beings; Earth, and Heaven. Thales thus raised the issue of what we today call *matter* theory'. Cf. Barnes who translates Thales' water-*archē* as "material principle" without qualification.[10] The question is: how does Ring's or Barnes' reading of Thales cohere with the thesis that the universe is full of gods - a thesis reportedly held by Thales?

As I shall try to show, this inclination towards reading the Presocratics as non-theological, philosophical-scientists has its root

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explains what he means by "science".

[10] Surely the Presocratic *archē* has a material form, generally speaking. But as we shall see, this is far from matter theory. Matter, for the Presocratics, is *living* matter. This is a significant difference not to be confused with the fact that what they regarded as sufficient ground for being alive - having a power of movement - may be read mechanistically today. By construing "movement" as a sign of life, certain deductions - e.g., being *psuchē* or god - follow which are not otherwise deducible.

in an inadequate grasp of the fundamental meaning of the Greek concept of "god". This begins, by and large, with Aristotle's conception of theology which is otherwise called *sophia* (wisdom). *Sophia*, we are told, is the noblest and the highest state of knowledge appropriate to the cognition of god. This is alright. But Aristotle goes on to contrast a primary sense of *sophia* as the "science of divine things" and its *sophos* as a thinker more ultimate than the *phusikos*, with the *sophia* of the *phusikos* said to be a kind but not the primary kind of *sophia* (*Meta.* 1005a32-b2) - thus implying that the *phusikos* does not cognize god or deal with divine things, consistent with his calling the Presocratics *phusikoi*[11] (often translated variously as "naturalists", "natural scientists", or "physicists") whom he distinguishes (*Meta.* 983b7-29) as "first philosophers" (*prōtoi philosophēsantes*) from the theologians of old (*pampalaioi kai theologēsantes*). Thus the real issue regarding how Aristotle stands in relation to his predecessors on the conception of god, and why some scholars shy away from a theological reading of Presocratic thought centres on the conception of "god". I am not denying that there is a significant contrast between the thought processes in, e.g., Hesiod's *Theogony*, and Democritus' atomic theory. The issue is rather whether the presumed division or divisibility of science and philosophy on the one hand, and theology or religion on the other hand, can validly be brought to bear on Presocratic thought. The point is not that the frequent recurrence of the word "god" in pre-Aristotelian philosophies is being denied, but whether "god" is being used in a theological sense or not. Thus Professor Burnet (1930, p.14) wrote:

[11] Aristotle *Phy.*, 186a20, 187a12, 203a16; *Meta.*, xii, 1071b27.

> The word "god" in its religious sense means first and foremost an object of worship. But already in Homer that had ceased to be its only signification. Hesiod's *Theogony* is the best evidence of the change. It is clear that many of the gods mentioned there were never worshipped by anyone, and some of them are mere personifications of natural phenomena, or even of human passions.[12]

If Burnet's judgement - that "god" in its religious sense means first and foremost an object of worship - has any truth-value, he means by "an object of worship", "an object which is *actually* worshipped". But if this were true, there would really not be a religious use of "god" from Thales through Plato to Aristotle. Accordingly, I shall devote the rest of this introductory chapter to the question of how "god" has been taken culturally, i.e., in traditional religion. This, it is hoped, will shed some light on whether and where the occurrance of the word "god" in pre-

[12] In a footnote to this passage he wrote that no one worshipped Okeanos and Tethys or even Ouranos and still less can Phobus and Deimos be regarded as gods in the religious sense. He says in addition: 'this non-religious use of the word "god" is characteristic of the whole period we are dealing with'. Cf. Theodor Gomperz (1906). Current during the late 19th century was the theory of history vigorously canvassed and represented by Wilamowitz, Rhode, and Eduard Meyer, according to which the spirit of Homer and of Ionian civilisation as a whole was thoroughly secular: the gods of Homer have ceased to be objects of worship; Homer does not regard the gods with reverence, and he dissociates the idea of god from that of worship. Some plausibility of this thesis derives from the vitality and vigour with which, it is sometimes pointed out, Xenophanes and Plato attack Homer and Hesiod. See further Murray (1924, p. 265). On the contrary, the attacks of Plato and Xenophanes, as with the tragic critiques of Aeschylus and Euripides, far from taking the Homeric and Hesiodic gods as irreligious, are the best examples of how serious Homeric and Hesiodic religion is part of the entire social and educational fabric of Greek culture. See Xenophanes B10; Plato's *Ion* 536d, 542b.

Aristotelian philosophies satisfies a religious or theological sense.

2 The Greek idea of god or divinity

Fortunately, Burnet's judgement can be disposed of summarily. Surely, traditional religion was largely ritual observance. But piety in Greece did not necessarily and always express itself in external acts of observance, or in cultic sacrament. Vlastos (1970)[13] points to Aristophanes' comedy, *Peace* (406ff.), where we are told that not the Greeks but the Barbarians worshipped the moon and the sun, and yet the well-attested story is that Diopeithes, in about 430B.C, secured a decree to declare Anaxagoras an atheist for declaring the sun and the moon to be mere material stuff. Add *Ap.* 26dff.: 'Do you mean that I do not believe in the godhead of the sun or moon, which is the common creed of all men?', protests Socrates to Meletus who tells the judges that Socrates declares the sun to be stone and the moon earth. The result is obvious: for if indeed there were no cults of the sun and the moon - and there is no hard evidence that there were - then, Burnet's thesis is invalidated, if, i.e., Anaxagoras was banished, and Socrates stood trial for his life for impiety regarding entities which Athenians did not worship but still recognised and defended as gods What then counts as "god" in a religious sense? I will first theorise and then substantiate.

Fundamentally, the ancient Greek conception of god consists in (1) the association of god with an originating and/or causally conceived power[14] - a conception which is presumed to imply

[13] 'Theology and Metaphysics in Early Greek Thought', in Allen and Furley (1970).

[14] My use of "cause" here should not be understood to imply the sense in which there is a relation between two ontologically separate things, x and

life, and (2) conceiving divinity in terms of (a) a state of perfection or ideality, (b) supremacy, (c) immortality or everlastingness,[15] and (d) self-sufficiency. (2) sets the *basic* conditions in which god or a divine reality exists. (I shall therefore sometimes refer to (2) simply as the "conditions of divinity"). The divinity of god or anything else implies (2a-d). Consequently, (2) is often though not always assumed rather than expressed where (1) occurs. (1) with (2) is necessary as an adequate or ultimate presupposition in an account or explanation of the universe or features of it. Let me now substantiate.

(1) That god is an originating and/or causal power whose existence is necessary as an ultimate presupposition in an account of the universe, is a common feature of the mythological cosmogonies, where all the gods *originate* from one or a pair of parent-god(s).[16] In Homer, *Okeanos* is the parent of all gods and all becomings (*Iliad* xiv, 200, 244, 301). With Tethys his wife the mother of all gods and godesses, they have, among their offspring, the Sun, Night, Dawn, The Seasons, The Sea, The rivers, The

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y, such that a change of state, condition or place in y is to be explained as the effect of the action of x. This does not occur in the Presocratics or in Socrates which, in this regard, is continuous with the mythological cosmogonies. There is, indeed, a clear distinction of aspects, and between different levels or states of existence of the cause and what it explains, but there is no ontological separation between the cause and what it explains. Consequently, unless otherwise stated, "cause" includes "principle": in association with divine reality "cause" is to be taken to mean a reality which serves as a principle of explanation. "Cause" also encapsulates the *vitality* implied in the conception of the divine power of god.

15 In the philosophical tradition, as we shall see, everlastingness or immortality is freely combined with or replaced by eternality.

16 There is a good sample of these mythological cosmogonies in chapter 1 of Kirk, Raven and Schofield (Hence, KRS), 1983

Nymphs, the gods of the winds. In Hesiod we hear: "First of all came (*genet'*) *Chaos*, and then..." (*Theogony*, 116). Chaos is the primal, divine "condition" whose presence is associated with the asexual generation of Earth, Love, Erebos and Night, and from these in turn are produced in three generations the rest of the gods among which the most prominent cult gods - including Zeus, come last.[17] Note that the most characteristic feature of these gods is that they are nature-gods, i.e., gods in and of this world, generated or born as part of the history of the universe, and constitute the powers represented by the "elemental" features of the universe.[18] Note also that there is no question of Okeanus and Tethys or of Chaos creating the universe *ex nihilo*. The originative or generative powers of the parent-god(s) presuppose existing material which is merely disposed or re-arranged in such a way that the universe may be said to have come to be as an offspring or body of the divine source of all things. And there is an inchoate conception of the universe as a cosmos, i.e., as an orderly system. This is helped out by the postulation of another deity, Fate (*Moira*)

Fate is associated with the idea of (cosmic) "order", an idea closely related to "ethical propriety". Fate sometimes appears as an impersonal force possessing the whole sum of divine power, sometimes as a personal, though not humanised, spirit (*daimōn*)

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[17] The most important members of the fifth generation include Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Athene, Hephaestos, Hermes, and Dionysus

[18] At the beginning of the *Theogony* Hesiod invokes the Muses to help him account not only for the origins and subsequent history of the gods but also the beginnings and subsequent history of the universe. When he settles down to account, he leaves no doubt that the two tasks are the same.

frequently appearing as the will of Zeus. As an impersonal overruling power, the personal gods, Zeus inclusive, are subject to Fate:[19] 'the ordained (*to chreōn*) is master of the gods and thee', says Athena in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 1486. In its overruling power, Fate represents that which ought to be. Its ordinance is at once moral and physical decree setting limits as to *impropriety* (not impossibility).[20] However, Fate is not itself a deity with an act of will designing and generating the physical and moral order to which the personal gods are subject; it is just a representation stating a fact about the disposition of nature, and to the statement of that fact adds nothing except that the disposition, including succession of events, is both necessary and just. This is a philosophically pregnant idea. It epitomises (a) the supreme role of Necessity in Greek thought; (b) the fusion of physics and ethics, of "order" and "propriety" or "goodness"; (c) levels of divine power or causality if, that is, Fate, as the just and necessary disposition of things, is *prior* to and defines the constitutional limits of other divine powers constituting a "cosmos"; (d) belief in the orderly or structural relation of things and events; (e) association of divinity with real, causally effective

[19] Although Zeus is sometimes identified with Fate, when he is set apart from it, he is an unenviable, and helpless god. Cf. *Il.* xvi, 431ff. - when Zeus wanted to deliver his son Sarpedon from fate, Hera rebuked him, and he did not disregard her; that is, he gave up what he desired to do. He then wails, ' O woe is me, because it is *fated* that Sarpedon, most dear to me of all men, shall be subdued by Patroclus. Also: "Night, vanguisher of gods and men", *Il.*, xiv, 258; and Styx, the waters of shuddering chill and forbidding power - the oath of the gods, often appears to have overpowering authority. See also *Ody.* iii, 236, vi, 188; Aeschylus, *Prometheus* ii, 531ff., 244; *Theogony* 383ff.

[20] Thus at *Il.* xvi, 780, the Achaeans prevail for a time in battle beyond Fate (*huper aisan*). Also. *Ody.* 132. Strictly speaking, offenders do not go beyond their fate but the bounds of morality.

logical-metaphysical conditions[21] (henceforth, causal conditions).

Although phenomenally represented, Greek gods are the various powers, physical, psychic or causal conditions inhering in or governing natural phenomena. These powers are causally conceived, which meant for the Greeks that they had life and energy of their own. Consequently, most of them were personified; Winds, Seasons, Earth, Justice, Victory, Peace, Prayers, etc.[22] However, what is involved is more than mere personification. For when Theognis calls Hope or Fear "dangerous *daemones*" (*Theognis*, 637ff) or when Sophocles speaks of *Erōs* as a power that 'warps to wrong the righteous mind for its destruction' (*Antigone*.,791ff), their statements are rooted in the naive, traditional intuitions typified in the Homeric and Hesiodic poems, that psychic forces are divinities existing not in but outside and beyond the control of man and are able to influence his life. Three things are to be noted: (a) The fact that all the divine powers are translatable into psychic, physical or causal conditions; (b) divine reality - call it god, *daemōn* or other - is not just the psycho-physical phenomenon or the causal condition, but the force or power that these represent, so that there is an implicit dualism here (which is supportive of Aristotle's conception of god as immaterial, since a force or power is arguably

21 "Metaphysical" and "condition" in the sense that the gods are represented in the physical elements of the universe, while Fate is the *meta*-physical power, and as an operative idea might also be deemed the condition, which represents the arrangement of these elements as a neceesary orderly system.

22 Apart from the Olympian gods, Homer and Hesiod also recognise among other divinities Fear (*Deimos*), Terror (*Phobos*), Strife (*Eris*), Ruinous Folly (*Atē*), Prayers (*Litai*), The Graces (*Charitēs*), Rumour (*Ossa*), Justice (*Themis*), Desire (*Erōs*), Forgetfulness (*Lēthē*), Aether, Night (*Nux*), Dawn (*Eōs*), Chaos, Death (*Thanatos*), Sleep (*Hypnos*), etc.

neither material nor immaterial);[23] (c) the fact that an adequate explanation of e.g., the psychological event of fear, love or hope *necessitates* the postulation of a divine Fear-, Love- or Hope-agent as an original source or cause. This last intimates a certain model of explanation; i.e., that a phenomenon is deemed adequately or ultimately accounted for when its divine origin, source or cause is specified. Alternatively, what is deemed an adequate account of a phenomenon necessitates the postulation of its specified divine origin or cause.[24]

Hesiod, whose theogony has strong allegorical elements, contributes to making (a)-(c) clear. Hesiod gives a god a significant name, and suggests that the god is equivalent to some intelligible concept multiplied by divinity. Thus Strength (*kratos*) and Force (*Bia*) have no house apart from Zeus, nor any dwelling nor path except that wherein god leads them - all this, in order to explain the awesome strength and power of Zeus. Similarly, Zeus marries *Mētis* (Intelligence), and Athene, equal to

[23] Aristotle is somehow aware of this inchoate dualism when he describes the *archai* of the first philosophers as always remaining the same though changing in their qualities (*Meta.* 983b6-12). Generally, however, Aristotle takes the physical representation of an *archē* as just that *archē*, and hence as a material cause. But if, while the body of a material *archē* - e.g., Thales' Water or Heraclitus' *Ever-Living Fire* - keeps changing, the power underlying its qualitative indefiniteness always remains the same, then here, even if crudely, is some intimation of the idea of unmoved mover in pre-Aritotelian philosophies. Xenophanes comes closest when he says of his God that It abides the same eternally while activating the world with the will of Its mind (ffr. 25, 26).

[24] I have no doubt that the postulation of Forms in Plato's dialogues is a logical continuation of this religious model of explanation: the justice of behaviour, the coldness of air, the oddness of three, are all traceable to their respective divine Form- origins or -causes. Aristotle takes this model for granted, among other things, in his account of human cognition in the *de Anima*, and in his concept of theology.

her father in strength and wisdom, is promptly born from Zeus' head.[25] Second, he marries Justice and begets Order, Law, Peace, and the Fates. Third, he marries Memory and begets the Muses. These allegories, and many more, were invented to explain some god or their attributes. In the end, Zeus appears not only as the father of Apollo, Artemis, and Persephone, but also Peace, and having as wives, Intelligence, Memory, Justice. We end up with a partial reduction of Zeus, the apparently personal god, into a list of divine attributes devoid of personality. If we add up the result of Hesiod's history we then get the total of a supreme god descended from the divine source of the universe, and largely definable as himself the source of power, force, justice, intelligence, memory, etc., in the world. "Zeus" thus becomes a convenient symbol enclosing a given quantity and quality of divine power. Yet this does not warrant the conclusion that the gods are mere personifications. Rather, this epitomises the belief that the basic features of the universe may be explained by tracing their divine source, origin or cause - as that which is ultimately presupposed in what is considered an adequate account.

Consider to this end the Hellenistic deification of Chance or Luck (*Tuchē*); a clear case of deification by the Greek religious mind of the potency of the irrational factor in order to account for the failings of the conscious, rational will. Here, effectual negation, recognised for the distinctive effects consequent on its assumed presence, is raised to a religious power considered as an adequate explanation of a feature of the universe. When Menander

[25] So in Aeschylus *Eumenides*, Athena's wisdom represents the ideal of civilisation; she puts justice and judicial procedure in place of blood-vengeance and primitive retribution

observes that "That which possesses power is now worshipped as god;[26] when E. R. Dodds (1951, p. 42) writes, 'And deity is power' (cf. Ehnmark (1935); 'The criterion of divine power is its supernatural power')[27], or when Xenophanes writes, "For this is what a god and a god's capacity is; to have power..." (Aristotle, *MXG* = A28), they must be understood to mean by "divine power" that power which has causal, i.e, explanatory value. Thus when Anaxagoras writes that "Mind rules [or has power] over all things" (*pantōn nous kratei*, fr. 12) we will not be justified to read his thesis non-theologically simply because he does not specifically call Mind god or divine. Similarly, we need not deny any theological implication if, from recognising the power of movement inhering a magnesian stone or (amber when rubbed), Thales infers that it has *psuchē*, and from this concludes that the universe is full of gods.[28] For Anaxagoras' Mind and Thales' *psuchē* are powers (of movement) which satisfy the *basic*, culturally determined meaning of "god", viz., that they are causal realities which exist necessarily as that which - for their proponents - adequately account for, or are ultimately presupposed in an account of, the universe or some feature of it. This basic meaning of god, if correct, also implies that an account is not necessarily non-theological simply because the ultimate principle of explanation which it contains has a material form or is *in* nature (*phusis*). Translated as "*nature*", an interest in *phusis* may be an interest in species of nature or in the nature of

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[26] *'To kratoun gar nun nomizestai theos'*, Kock, *Commicorum Atticorum Fragmenta.*

[27] *The Idea of God in Homer* (Upsala), p.11, quoted by Vlastos in Allen and Furley (1970).

[28] See *de An.* 405a19, 411a7

all things or both. That the Presocratics *primarily* investigated the nature of all things, is hardly controversial. Such an investigation, however, is not properly labled or assumed to be "physics" or "science" where this implies a contrast with "metaphysics" or "theology". As the records show, these investigations primarily pursued the discovery of fundamental causal powers in clear attempts to account for things as they are or as they have come to be. And these powers were often called god or the divine.[29]

(2) Conditions of divinity. Divine power was *experienced* by the pious as a transcendental reality. "Transcendental", in the sense that, although experienced, divine reality lies beyond human volition. Thus the Hellenistic man experienced *Tuchē* as a transcendental divine force, in the sense that he felt that the limits to or gaps in his conscious, rational, willing activity were positively filled in by the divine agency of *Tuchē*. *Tuchē* is thus a explanatory postulate, presumed to be an adequate or ultimate account of a feature of the universe. Similarly, the Homeric hero experienced *aretē* (virtue) as an event of divine presence. He felt that his valour came to him, rather than that it proceeded from his own conscious will or training: Ares is said to enter Hector "so that the inward body is packed full of force and fighting strength"

[29] Among the Presocratics, the *main* theses speculate about the nature or structure of the universe as a whole. The investigations which come under the following studies; astronomy, embryology, psychology, physiology, epistemology, are, some of them, mere guesses, sometimes deduced *a priori* from the structure of the universe, sometimes suppported by observation. However, all these are subordinate to the theses in which every existing thing is reducible or traceable to its origin or cause in some *archē* (or a set, or an infinite number of *archai*).

(*Il.* 17, 210-12); Odysseus, disguised by Athene as a ragged old man, is challenged to a fist-fight. Athene stands close to him and magnifies his limbs so that his challenger and the onlookers are struck with awe (*Ody.* 18, 66ff.); Telemachus is described emerging from his chamber in the morning: "he is like a god in presence": Athene has bestowed an enchantment of grace on him (*Ody.* 2.1ff.). We remember also the restful, beautifying sleep bestowed on Penelope by Athene (*Ody.* 18, 187-96). In general, experiencing a state of perfection or ideality was for the Homeric man an event of divine presence.

Indeed, the Homeric gods are idealized human beings: the gods possess basically the same physical and psychological constitution as ours, differing only in degree of power, excellence, intelligence, size, etc. The human condition is taken as the basic model and imagined in an ideal state. Some of the perfections of Homeric gods are conceived negations of certain limitations of the human condition. Gods are a class of living, bodily beings, but they do *not* die (*a-thanatoi*); they are born and do grow, but their bodies *never* age beyond the apex of development. Ambrosia and nectar, the (magic) foods of the gods, entail *no* corruption of the flesh. Gods do *not* have to toil, get sick, grow old (*a-gerō*) or decrepit. They are self-sufficient, in having all they desire,[30] and are believed to enjoy a completely happy, trouble-free life, in the company of their peers, forever spending their time in feasting, leisure, glory and honour. Gods are causal powers, as we have observed, but this includes magical powers of transformation or

[30] Part, at least, of what makes them self-sufficient is their conceived superior powers by which they can accomplish many things for themselves. But traditionally, logical/conceptual and material self-sufficiency are indistinguishable.

self-transformation, as Athene in the *Odyssey* often demonstrates. Consequently, the gods are not (always or absolutely) subject to the laws of physical nature.

Implicit in this anthropomorphic idealisation of the gods are two principles: (a) that divinity is constituted by preeminence, perfection, ideality, greatness, nobility, self-sufficiency and immortality - properites, attributions or conditions which express the sublimity of god; (b) the use of human nature as a basic model for conceiving divine nature. However, (b) creates problems and contradictions for (a). The family of gods, like the human family, quarrel, hate, are jealous, suffer misery, and in the *Iliad*, wound one another emotionally and physically. In a number of cases, the gods', especially Zeus' moral behaviour is, by human standards, despicable. Consequently, we must suppose that the basis of reverence of the gods is to be determined by the properties or conditions of divinity and the range of powers associated with gods. And, of course, these are not held out as prospects for men. Thus it is *hubris* to aspire to the divine condition or to be god. Piety consists in the recognition both of the existence of the gods and/or what they sanction, *and* awareness of the limits of mortal in relation to divine power. One ought to keep the right distance from the gods; 'Seek not to become Zeus... mortal things befit a mortal' as Pindar (*Nem.* 6, 1-7) so well put it. This is echoed in the Delphic motto: "Know Thyself", the original meaning of which is that when entering the dwelling of god, a man has to remember the limits of his powers. In this "geometric" and vertical relation between man and god, it is significant that the Greek equivalent of "sin" was originally 'a missing of the mark' (*harmatia*) - a

cognitive and mental aberration rather than an evil lying in the will.[31] Ordinary life was a religious demand for an intensification and enrichment here and now, not hereafter. Consequently, ordinary piety was not an introspective self-analysis and self-questioning. The syndrome of the "inner life", of "moral responsibility", or of "internal spiritual duty" and "obligation" first received philosophical expression in Pythagorean and, more profoundly, in Socratic philosophy.

The real religious significance of the Homeric gods, however, is in their relation to the supreme value system of Greek society as represented by the evaluative words "*aretē*" (virtue/excellence) and "*agathos*" (noble, good). Ancient Greek society from Homer was characterised by a dual value system represented by the word *aretē*.[32] A man is *agathos* by virtue of his possession of *aretē*. But *aretē* is a complementarity of socialising and egoistic parts ("quiet" and "competitive" parts - Adkins). In Homer's warrior-society the egoistic part of *aretē* was constituted by competitive values like valour, might, resourcefulness; while the socialising parts of *aretē* were internalized social-religious constraints constituted by justice, temperance, wisdom, piety.[33] Competitive *aretē* enables one to prosper and flourish but under the constraints of the socialising *aretē*.[34] The religious

31 This is so visible in Aristotle's ethical theory of the Mean. This, in part at least, explains the intellectual bias of all Greek ethics. For the difference between right- and wrong- doing was a mere difference of quantitative over- or -under doing something, not bad in itself.

32 The following account is inspired by Adkins (1960), and Beckman's (1979) perceptive reading of it.

33 In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, an *agathos* was supposed to be, on the socialising side, *dikaios* (just, fair, or observant of others' rightful claims), *pinutos* (wise), *saophrōn* (moderate), *theodes* (pious, god-fearing).

importance of the Homeric gods is to be seen in the traditional belief that they sanctify and sanction the socialising parts of *aretē*,[35] while ideally exemplifying the egoistic parts of *aretē* which the Homeric hero occasionally embodies.

By the 5th century, *aretē* has come to consist also in technical excellence which is productive of certain evaluated sort of goods - whether in the arts, politics or war. But the latter half of the fifth century is a record of disintegrating social-religious *aretē*. Considerations of justice and piety becomes incidental and peripheral. This is amply evidenced in Thucydides' version of the Athenian Assembly debate on rebellious Mytilene and Melos. While the Melians were appealing to consideratons of traditional justice and practices, the Athenians were construing justice as dependent on the equality of power to compel, arguing that the strong do what they have the power to do while the weak accept what they have to accept. The Athenians, bent on destroying Melos, refused to hear any appeal to traditional rights. Nor were they exercised by piety or shame. Reflecting this moral-religious crisis was Callicean anti-moralism (*Gorgias*), and Thrasymachean immoralism (*Republic*). The general picture is in the *nomos-phusis* argument of the Sophists. Astutely interpreting the

[34] In other words, one was to pursue one's personal prosperity within the limits of justice and temperance sanctioned by the gods, although, for the most part, the logic of social right and wrong was based on personal honour and status: to commit a wrong is to transgress a person's honour, necessitating vengeance and retribution. *Aidōs*, the internalized sense of shame, supplemented the divine sanction of Zeus, and retributive deterrence.

[35] The gods, particularly Zeus, sanction earthly laws, and uphold the authority of rulers. See *Il.*, 9, 98-99; 16, 386-88; *Ody.*, 19, 106ff., 17, 485-88.

emerging spirit of democratic egotism, some Sophists distinguished natural justice, which they identified with the Might is Right philosophy from conventional justice, which they conceived as arbitrary imposition of "unnatural" hindrances upon the energies of the naturally strong person. These Sophists canvassed for the competitive values of Homeric *aretē* in the name of personal excellence and power - whether this occurs in war or in the field of politics and rhetoric or, even in ordinary day to day life.[36] Related to this conception of *aretē* is their critical attention to the phenomenon of religion, especially on the question of the origin of gods. By implication, this critical attitude puts into question the divine sanctions associated with moral behaviour or positive law. Some tried to answer by implying - as in Protagoras' famous man-measure principle - that religion is the projection of man's inner life or a device to make people observe the laws of a state (e.g., Prodicus B5, Critias' *Sisyphus*, Sextus *Adv. math.* 9, 54). Plato's Socrates responded to this moral-religious crisis by unifying the egoistic and socialising parts of *aretē*,[37] which by synecdoche he identified with *sophia*.[38] The

[36] Although not a sophist, Crito (*Cr.* 45dff.) expresses the egoistic values of the day when he challenges Socrates to show that he is *agathos* and *andreios* (manly or courageous) by escaping from prison. After all - he goes for the ridicule - Socrates had made *aretē* his concern all through his life. Socrates does not disagree with him. But he offers as the sole criterion of any such action, whether it is *dikaios* (just). In other words, the proposed action in question can be no *aretē*, if they could not morally *and* intellectually justify it to themselves. And that justification is neither determined by convention nor by consensus, but by whether it will lead to a spiritually better life (47eff.)

[37] I offer here a highly compressed, introductory account of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. I am avoiding full textual references to justify my claims here in order not to repeat similar references in the fuller account of their respective philosophies of religion which occur later.

Socratic *aretē-* and *agathos-* man is a morally excellent performer whose actions are fully guided by philosophical wisdom. *Aretē* and *agathon* are now a knowable, causally realistic *divine* condition or state of the soul: a man is truly *agathos* who knows *aretē*, and this entails that he be able to give a dialectically indefeasible *logos* of *aretē* (*ch.* 158c7-159a10); but to be able do so already presupposes that one's *psuchē* is in a *sophia* state or condition. This condition is real because it is a distinctively realisable state of the soul; and it is divine because *sophia* is the key property of god (*Ap.* 32a5-6). Yet, according to Socrates, to pursue *sophia* is our religious duty and service to god (23c, 30a). It is noteworthy that Socrates' defence against the charge of impiety or atheism centres on his appeal to his practice of *philo-sophia*, whose end was to fix a desire for the overriding need for *sophia*. And to embody *sophia* is to attain the good of life (*to agathon*) which is identified with *eudaimonia* (spiritual well-being or happiness), claimed to be what we all want and want for its own sake in life (*Eud.* 282ff.; *G.* 470e4-11).

Although Socrates conceives *sophia* or *epistēmē* as the art and science of living[39], the association of *sophia* and *to agathon* does not mean that *sophia* is productive of *the good* in the sense in which the knowledge of a craftsman is, in application, productive of certain distinctive goods; rather *sophia* is constitutive of *the good* (cf. *G.* 507a) as denoting the highest

[38] Because of the ethical orientation of his philosophy, Socrates conservatively keeps to the small number of cardinal virtues - wisdom, courage, temperance, piety, justice. See *Eud.* 279a4-c2; *Prt.* 329c2-d1, 329e5-330a1; *G.* 506e1-507e7; *R.* 427d6-11; *Phdo.* 69c1-2. All the virtues are one because each is a form of knowledge (*epistēmē*) or wisdom (*sophia*), as Socrates understood it (see *G.* 507a; *Phdo.* 69a-b)

[39] *Charm.* 165c; *Euthd.* 282e, 299; *Prt.* 311, 312, 319a; cf. *Laws* 961eff.

fulfilment of ourselves as ensouled beings. Accordingly, *sophia* must be pursued with overriding priority (*Ap.* 30b, 29d9ff). This entails a new religion which is humanistic and rational; for piety will be defined by what is relevant to the final embodiment of *sophia*, and the pursuit of *sophia* would itself count as what constitutes service or duty to god.[40] Such a religion is likely to entail some rejection of the conceptual aspect of god which is consistent both with ritual sacrifices, initiation or orgiastic ecstacies as means of gaining happiness, spiritual salvation, and blessed after-life. As we shall see, Plato and Aristotle adopt this Socratic religion, with specific differences of detail. Presently, let us note that this emphasis on *sophia* associated with divine wisdom and happiness as realisable psychic state or condition presupposes a shift from the Homeric conception of a ghostly *psuchē* to a highly evaluative conception of *psuchē*. This conceptual shift reflects the influence of Pythagorean thought and the mystery religions.

The mystery religions (- advent: 8th/7th century BC) fill the gap created in the vertical and geometric structure of order and propriety in ethics and religion associated with Olympian metaphysics,[41] and epitomised in the Delphic motto - Know

[40] The religious element in Socrates' conception of the pursuit of *sophia* seems anticipated by Pythagoras, if the stories we hear are true. According to Heraclides Ponticus, Pythagoras was the first to coin the term "*philosophia*" (love of wisdom) and also to call himself a *philosophos* (lover of wisdom) in conscious allusion to the belief that that which is really wise is not man but god (Fr. 87, Wehrli). But there is not enough evidence to credit Pythagoras with full anticipation of Socratic religion as activity in pursuit or love of *sophia*.

[41] This "vertical" culture of Homeric society is represented in its Olympian religion by an ordered relation between gods at the top, kings and heroes in the middle, and ordinary people at the bottom. This culture declined

Thyself - which reminds men of the ineffable ideality and everlasting bliss' of the divine condition permanently set off against the imperfect finitude of the human condition, and which it is *hubris* for man to try to attain in this life. This bridging of the gap requires a highly evaluative conception of man, and in particular, of *psuchē*.

Homer and Hesiod had left mankind far removed from the gods who were their remote ancestors and had promised a happy immortality after death to only a few. Hesiod, observing the hints of Homer about the degeneracy from the Golden age of the present generation of men, had expanded these hints into his eloquent portrayal of the Iron Age. In his turn he hints that the real hope of mankind lies in the extinction of this race and the recommencement of the cycle of change.[42] The mystery religions, on the other hand, guaranteed a happy immortality[43] to

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42 We may read this doctrine in the systems of Anaximander, Anaximenes, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Empedocles, the Stoics.

43 The idea of survival after death in Greece did not begin with the introduction of the mystery religions. It was implicit in the age-old Greek burial customs, explicit in Homer's ghostly home, Hades. The idea of rewards and punishment which goes with the idea of survival after death is referred to at *Il.* iii, 278ff., xix, 259ff. The dominant picture of the Homeric poems, to be sure, is that the dead left behind them souls which went wailing down into the dark house of Hades beneath the earth. These souls were shadowy and witless images without substance or intelligence or blood. In Hesiod, we also find blessed immortality as a reward for the virtues of the men of the long past, of guardian angels mediating between god and man, protection of the righteous and punishment of the wicked. And in the battle of the gods and the Titans, we find a dualistic conflict between the powers of good and evil, order and disorder. We find traces of these also in Aeschylus where the postmortem punishment of certain offenders is intimately tied up with the traditional unwritten laws and the traditional functions of Erinyes and Alastor (*Eum.* 267ff., 339ff., *Suppliants* 414ff). However, the poets of the 7th and 6th century BC, impressed with the misery and injustice of life, and with

all their devotees without distinction, social or sexual. However, the condition upon which this guarantee was made varied from the elaborate ritual at Eleusis centred on the story of Demeter and Persephone,[44] to the Orphic system developed from the story about Dionysus, which combined ritual with an elaborate theology[45] and an ascetic discipline of purification. Whatever

it the problem of justifying god's apparent failure to apportion rewards according to merit never invoked immortality and the idea of compensation and retribution in another world as a possible explanation and palliative of the state of affairs on earth. Even the tragedians, who must have been subject to the influences of the Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries made astonishingly slight references to an existence after death. A play could not well be ended with the statement that the hero or villain would receive what he deserves after death.

[44] Traditionally, native Greece (or Athens) had her chthonic gods. Then came the Orphic version. Demeter, the earth-goddess, the story goes, had been robbed of her daughter Persephone by Hades, god of the dead. Mourning and searching took her around the world. Meantime, there was winter over the whole earth, and the crops died and grew no more. Finally Zeus, touched by the plight of mankind - who were about to die for want of food, prevailed on Hades to restore Persephone for a portion of the year. As often as Persephone returns from below and Demeter rejoices, it is Spring and Summer time. But when Persephone goes down again to Hades and the dead, and the mother mourns for her, the crops and fruits and trees die with her, and it is Winter again.

[45] The story of Dionysus, son of Zeus and Semele: Dionysus, like Demeter and Persephone, was a god of fertility of the earth, of the harvest of the trees, and especially of vine, vintage, and wine. Dionysus was born for joy and blessings to mankind. His gifts bring strength and healing of the body, gladness and forgetfulness of care of the mind. Hence, his nickname, *Lusios*; i.e. the loosener of care. He too died every year and rose again triumphant over death - being also a god of the living and fruitful earth, of spring, summer, and of the seeming death of all things in winter. The original myth of Dionysus had developed into a complicated theology in which the origin of all things was left in much doubt; it was now Night, now Chaos, now Water and Primitive Slime, now Time. Eventually, from the union of Time and Necessity, or from Chaos and Ether, there proceded a gigantic egg from which appeared a God variously called Zeus, Pan, or Phanes. This god was the World-All. Last and mightiest of all of Zeus' children entrusted with the lordship of the

differences exist between them, the mystery religions express, in an articulate and organised form, a yearning for redemption from the imperfection, mortality, and finitude of man's lot. They fanned the hope of escape and peace in some life beyond the brief span of human existence. These mystery religions[46] provide their initiates with opportunites for the temporary taste of freedom from the concerns and constraints of mortal life during the orgies of sympathetic rituals in which they aspire to identify their *psuchē* with that of their god to which it originally belongs, and are believed in the process to actually taste, temporarily, of immortality and divine bliss. This ushers in a highly valued status for the *psuchē*. But the actual teaching of the Eleusinian mysteries failed to give any distinctly moral value and function to the idea of immortality. The fortunes of the soul were determined not by moral character and deserts but by a formal relation to the mysteries. The indispensable condition for reaching the Island of the Blest - a heaven painted in terms of earthly experience, purified and idealised - lay not in being virtuous but in being an Eleusinian. The *psuchē* still retained its personality, and moved amid variety and multiplicity. This teaching or experience, however, was short of the thorough-going ideal of the mystic whose ultimate vision was to identify with, or loose his individuality in, his god, rather than to be forever separated from

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world, Dionysus, was torn to pieces by the Titans at the instigation of jealous Hera.... Zeus blasts the Titans with thunderbolt, and from their ashes sprang man. For this reason man is sinful and imperfect. But because the ashes contain also the fragment of the divine substance whom the Titans had devoured, there is also within him the spark of, and the possibility of a passage to, immortality.

[46] There were more than two mystery religions in and around Athens, the cult of Adonis, and of Cebele, are examples.

his god on account of his finitude and separate character.

So in Orphic dogma, the evil in men has its roots in his inheritance from Titanic wickedness, and the moral conflict between good and bad within us encapsulates the struggle between Dionysus and his Titanic enemies. The hope of salvation lay in freeing the fragment of the divine imprisoned within us from the foes and bonds which keep it from its divine origin, and of uniting it with its source. These bonds and foes, so far as human life is concerned, the Orphic found in the desires and experiences of the body. The Titanic element is the physical, the flesh, the senses, and the "world" connected with them. The soul is an enstrangement from god, corrupted by the heritage of evil from the Titans. But sin is now a sympton, not of an acquired shortsightedness in the soul removable by any external means but of a congenital blindness which no "earthly" means could cure. Indeed the soul could be purified but only religiously by ritual observances and asceticism and this, they taught, requires time. Hence, they foresaw an indefinite process of transmigration and reincarnation in which the soul was born again and again - reaping in each life the fruits, bitter and sweet, of the degree of her adherence to Orphic precept and practice in fomer existences. And they allowed their fancy to play with the disembodied interval which separated rebirth from death. They imagined the soul led to the underworld by Hermes to be judged. The uninitiated they saw lying in a morass of mud awaiting reincarnation. The initiates they pictured as enjoying greater or less felicity or undergoing purgatorial cleansing according to the state of purity attained on earth. Only by breaking this vicious

cycle of transmigration and reincarnation altogether could the soul attain enlightenment and rest eternally in Dionysus. Only when the soul had drunk the living waters of Memory after having drunk, and been drugged by, the waters of Forgetfulness could she utter, 'Thou art become god from man'. The idea of man's remote kinship with immortal gods is being replaced by the idea of direct universal participation of man in divinity; and the divine element in man is his *psuchē*.

3 Summary

The foregoing is not intended as an account of Greek religious history, but as a minimum historical background against which the high frequency of the occurrence or use of "god" and cognate religious locutions not only in the Presocratics, but also in Plato and Aristotle will, I hope, be illumined. It will also enable us to assess Aristotle's relation to his predecessors on the conception of god or philosophy of religion.

We may now summarise our discussions of the concept of god. We have, I hope, observed that basically, god is conceived as a causal and/or originating power, a conception which is presumed to imply life. This power ranges in form from physical and psychic to causally effective, logical-metaphysical conditions as represented by Fate. Any reality whose existence is necessary as the ultimate presupposition in an explanation of the universe or a feature of it, and which satisfies the conditions of divinity - (causal) supremacy, ideality or perfection, immortality, and self-sufficiency - is god. This basic meaning of god or divine reality entails a model of explanation according to which the ultimate or

fundamental ground of all things is divine, but, barring additional or independent characterisations or assumptions, it entails neither that god be material nor immaterial,[47] nor exist in absolute independence from everything else, nor be a final (as opposed to a material, efficient and formal) cause. Nor does it entail that god be anthropomorphic,[48] nor a self- rather than -other thinking being, nor even morally and emotionally appealing.[49] The mystery religions have conceived *psuchē* as having divine origin, and as capable of divine happiness and of direct reunion with, or participation in, god by ritual purification.

Traditionally, piety is expressed in reverence or acceptance of the gods as traditionally conceived. But to prove piety it is not enough to show just that you pray and sacrifice the gods of the *polis*. You must also show that you accept and believe them. Thus piety is not minimally grounded in external acts of tendence towards a god which is actually worshipped, but on an inner

[47] I have already drawn attention to the fact that, arguably, a causal power is neither material nor immaterial, although it may be identified with a material which embodies it.

[48] Although as the idea of god develops, Fate, Necessity or Justice tends to become identified with the supreme will and authority of Zeus. Still, as Hesiod has intimated, the personality of Zeus may be analysed away as a set of powers or properties: Force, Strength, Intelligence, Memory, Justice, etc.

[49] Cleve (1969, vol.1, p.133), supposes that a god must "have a moral and emotional appeal". But what really constitutes "moral and emotional appeal"? Did the ancient Greeks divinize Memory, Intelligence, Sleep, The winds, Sun and Moon because they have emotional and moral appeal? Did ordinary pious men feel emotionally and morally appealed to the licentious flirtations of Zeus? Or perhaps "moral and emotional appeal" means a feeling of personal relation with god. If so, it is difficult to understand the religious fervour which went into prosecuting Anaxagoras for impiety against the sun and the moon which were no cult gods, or why the Greeks would divinize *Tuchē*, Peace, Victory, Memory, etc.

conviction in respect of the recognition and acceptance of supreme, causal powers recognised and accepted by the *polis* as divine. This may entail that a philosopher is not neccesarily irreligious or impious simply because he argues to the existence of a reality called god which is not recognisable as a cultic god, although such a reality satisfies the set of traditional conditions of divinity.

From our discussions so far, then, if *theologos*[50] may be translated as "rational speculation about, or justification of, god", what is minimally needed for an account to be theological or religious is an argument to the *existence* of god or the divine in its basic religious sense. It would seem, then, that historically, rational theology or philosophy of religion or the science of God or whatever other name we give it, began as a self-conscious discourse representing a phase of thought which differed from ordinary religion in being the reflective production or justification, not necessarily of the entire content of religion, but of religious categories like god, the divine or soul. So that theology would represent the mental development that has outgrown simple faith and began to feel the necessity of understanding what it believes. An account, therefore, would remain theological or religious if, in going beyond ordinary religious consciousness in a spirit of rational skepticism and even denial, and ultimately to the level of critical characterisation and essential definition, it regresses to the restoration or justification of the basic categories of our religious faith and beliefs, but in such a way that the fundamental meaning of such categories are retained. It would be consistent with such

50 Nowadays, in the western world, theology bears on divinely revealed truth, a christianised definition.

argumentative restoration or justification of religion, that while it yields changes in our earlier naive consciousness, it may yet prune such consciousness of much that had counted as essential, so that ultimately it is difficult but not impossible to detect the identity that has maintained itself throughout the mental development in that account.

In the following three chapters I shall be expounding the main pre-Aristotelian philosophies in order to see whether the "god" contained in them satisfies the basic, culturally and religiously determined meaning of god. Then we will be able to see how justified the reading is which divides off, without qualification, these pre-Aristotelian thought-systems into different areas of knowledge - philosophy and science on the one hand, theology/religion and metaphysics on the other. When we have seen how "god" has been taken philosophically by Aristotle's predecessors, we shall then be able to see how Aristotle's "god" of the *Metaphysics* stands in relation to this preceding conception of god. Accordingly, chapters two, three, four and five deal successively with the Presocratics, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The concluding sixth chapter will be a summary of results obtained in these previous chapters

TWO

THEOLOGY IN THE PRESOCRATICS

1 Hypothesis

In the previous chapter, I argued that there are two complimentary aspects in the traditional Greek conception of god: that the basic religious sense of "god" is that of (i) a causal and/or originating power of nature - physical, psychic, or a causal condition - which serves as the ultimate presupposition in an explanation of the universe as a whole or a feature of it, and that (ii) the conception of such causal power, which is presumed to imply life, satisfies certain basic conditions of divinity; supremacy, ideality/perfection, everlastingness, self-sufficiency. I also argued that (ii) constitutes the conditions for the existence of god or a divine reality, and is thus often assumed rather than expressed. Is (i) with (ii) satisfied in the Presocratics? I shall argue that it is fully satisfied, though we shall see that while (i) features prominently in these philosophies, (ii) is, for the most part, implicit. It will thus become clear, I believe, that by satisfying (i) and (ii), the philosophies of our major Presocratics are a series of rational theologies - arguments to the existence of *archai* which satisfy the basic, religiously determined conception of god outlined above. It shall also become clear that, except for the exclusive eccentricity of the Eleatics, the originating and/or causal function of the power associated with god is expressed in terms of motion. It is as if the Presocratics had read Homer in the same terms as Plato: 'When Homer speaks of "Okeanus, source of the

gods, and mother Tethys", he means that all things are the offspring of a flowing stream of change' (*Theae*. 152e). However, the type of motion, hence the sense of causality associated with the *archē*, is organic, functional and logical rather than mechanical.

2 Thales

Thales (c.624/3-546/5), the first Greek natural philosopher (*phusikos*), according to Aristotle, was also a man of practical wisdom.[1] His reputation as a scientist - in mathematics and astronomy - was incontrovertible even in classical antiquity. His "laureateship" as one of the seven sages of Greece may have been a consequence both of his practical as well as his theoretical wisdom. He encroached upon Apollo's traditional prerogative of prophecy when he predicted a good harvest of olives for a particular season, as well as forecast the eclipse of the sun in 585 B.C. Considered in isolation these are of no theological moment, especially so when his motivation seems practical; in the former case, to establish a corner in the olive presses, and in the latter, to stop a battle between two neighbouring armies. However, if we add Aristotle's report that Thales said that the universe is full of gods and that the *psuchē*[2] is likewise diffused in the universe, then, the theoretical assumptions and implications for the religious community in which he lived can be all but an inconsequence. For here is a spirited, if unproclaimed, rebellion, against traditional religious dogma, myth and authority.

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1 Aristotle's *Meta*. 933b20; *Pol*. 1259a9; Herodotus' *Histories* 1, 74; 1, 170

2 Since translating *psuchē* as soul misleadingly resounds Platonic or cartesian dualism, I will be maintainig the transliteration "*psuchē*" until otherwise stated.

Aristotle supposes Thales to have derived the conclusion that the universe is full of gods from the premise (*hothen isōs*) that the *psuchē* is diffused (*memeichthai*) in the universe. Aristotle further supposes Thales (*eoike*) to have said that *psuchē* is something kinetic (*kinētikon ti*), 'if indeed (*eiper*) he said that magnesian stone possesses *psuchē* because it moves iron' (*de An.* 405a19, 411a7). According to Diogenes Laertius (1, 24) Aristotle and Hippias say that he (sc. Thales) gave a share of *psuchē* even to "*psuchē*-less" objects, using magnesian stone and amber (when rubbed) as examples.

Thales' main thesis, however, is that the origin and substance of existing things is water.[3] To recapitulate the main items of Thales' thesis, we have the following:

A. The *archē* of existing things is water

B. The *psuchē*, which is something kinetic, is diffused in the universe (from which - *hothen*)

C. All things are full of gods.

The first philosophical thesis is full of metaphysical and religious language. The status of water as a first principle (*archē*)[4] derives from its inherent power of change multiplied by an indefiniteness as to its quality.[5] On my account, Thales' position

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[3] *Meta.* 983b6ff.

[4] Already in Homer we have the mythical thesis that the watery divinity, Okeanos, is the parent of all gods - which means also that it is the divine power that generates the universe. Moreover, Miletus, as the metropolis of seventh century Aegean commerce, was most probably apprised of ancient Egyptian and Babylonian myths in which the origin of all things was divine water. The story goes that Thales visited Egypt.

[5] According to *Meta.* 983b6ff. The conception of quality in the Presocratics is not abstract quality, but a concrete or quasi-concrete thing. See Heidel, 'Qualitative Change in Presocratic Philosophy', in Mourelatos (1974)

as the first Western philosopher or scientist should not consist merely in *A*, even if he also inferred from it the proposition that the earth rests on water - a proposition which would hardly have been original with Thales in the then known world. What marks or must mark Thales off from Homer, Hesiod, or Pherecydes[6] is, in my view, the structure, not the content, of his thought: instead of directly assuming Water as a divinity - a characteristic way of the mythological thinking in Hesiod and Homer - we have, according to Aristotle's presentation, a set of propositions constructible in such a way that it yields an argument whose conclusion is a definition of what it is to be a god. For, if Aristotle is right, viz., that Thales inferred *C* from *B*, the conclusion is that *psuchē*, which is something kinetic, is god or, in other words, god is the power of movement inhering nature. If this is right, that is possible only if the key terms in *B* (*psuchē*), and *C* (god) are commensurable, i.e. if they are inter-translatable. It would otherwise be illegitimate to infer *C* from *B*; for from the assumption that the *psuchē* is something kinetic and diffused in the universe, it will not follow that all things are full of gods. If it follows, then, there is a missing link between *B* and *C* - and this should be a defining premise which will identify the terms "god" and *psuchē*. Is there evidence for such identification? There is.

In Aristotle's text on Thales we find only a single defining clause for *psuchē*, viz., that it is something kinetic. The "orthodox" (in contrast to Orphic, and the ghostly Homeric) meaning of *psuchē* is that it is the breath of life. *Psuchē*, originally the verbal noun of

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6 Pherecydes is credited with postulating eternal cosmic principles two of which are Time and Earth (and also Water called Chaos, frr. 1, 2)

the verb *psuchein*, namely, "to breathe" means also "to live". Here "consciousness" and "the power of movement" are implicit in the very idea of being alive. The formula is symmetrical; to breathe is to live or to move, and to live or move is to breathe. As we shall see, the philosophies of Anaximenes[7] and Diogenes of Apollonia[8] substantiate a philosophical interpretation of *psuchē* which, apart from meaning "life-breath" also means "power of movement" and "consciousness". Thales' proposition that magnesian stone and amber (when rubbed) have *psuchē* because they move iron suggests that "to move" is "to live" and that "the power of movement" is the same as "life-force", and vice versa. However, the very idea of a natural power or force is, given certain conditions, precisely that which the Greek mind was wont to divinize and to call god. Thus to call the power of movement *psuchē* seems to be a transparent way of attributing divinity to the power of motion. If so, the inference from B to C is tautological, and valid. Indeed, at *Laws* 10, 899ff., Plato affirms, though non-attributively, this Thalean theology by arguing to the conclusion that "all things are full of gods", from the premise that psuchai are the causes of the movements of the astral entities which in turn produce the years, months, seasons, as well as all forms of physical change. As in Thales, so in Plato, the existence of gods is identified with the causal power of motion as what is ultimately presupposed in what is deemed an adequate explanation of the cosmos or certain features in it.

Far from suggesting that Thales reasoned in a particular way, it would not be extraordinary speculation to suggest the following as

[7] Aetius, *Placita*, 1.3,4

[8] Frr. 5 and 6

a formal, hypothetical reconstruction of his theological thesis, assuming A and B above at the appropriate steps. (1) If anything has a power of movement, it is *empsychos*; viz., alive or capable of movement. (2) If anything has both a power of movement and a cosmo-physical stuff it is God. (3) Water has a power of movement and constitutes the physical stuff of the cosmos. Therefore, (4) Water is God.[9] (5) By (2) and (3), the universe is full of gods,[10] and (6), *psuchē* is god[11] (- by definition as a power of movement). (7) By (1), (2), and (3), *psuchē* is diffused in the universe.[12] (8) Therefore, the universe is divinely alive,[13] by (1), (4), and (5). Therefore, (9) the physical stuff of the universe, Water, is the body of a divine power of motion called, God. According to Diogenes Laertius (hence, DL) 1, 36 = A1, Thales also said that, (10) 'the divine has neither beginning nor end (*ti to theion to mēte archēn echon mēte mēteleutēn*), and (11) *psuchai* are immortal (*athanatous*, DL 1, 24). Doxography also attributes an apparently stoic identification of the divine principle in water with mind.[14]

That (10) and (11) were possibly said by Thales is not an unduly credulous supposition since the same rules of admissibility apply

9 Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*.,1,3 tells us that Water was Thales' God.

10 Cf. Ps-Aristotle, *Peri Kosmou*, 397b16.

11 See Aristotle, *de An.* 405a21, where he argues that the Presoratics made the soul out of their *archē*. Cf. *Phdo.* 96b.

12 According to Aristotle. See also Aetius,1,7,11.

13 A theme which, we shall see, is reccurrent in Presocratic thought. See also Aristotle's *de An.*, 411a7; A22.

14 See e.g., Cicero, *de Natura. Deorum* 1, 25; Aetius (1. 7. 11 [DK 11A23]). Cf. Ps-Galen, *Historia Philosopha* 35 (*Doxographi Graeci*, 618). Perhaps, we have no means of confirming or refuting this testimony. Accordingly, it may be taken as given if, as I believe, it is not inconsistent with Thales' main thesis.

to other alleged propositions of Thales so far accepted. (10) is self-explanatory. The nature (*phusis*) of all things itself cannot be said to have a beginning; for that would lead to an infinite regress. Nor can the nature, i.e., the fundamental basis of all things be said to come to an end; for that would mean the end of all existence. (11) is likewise self-explanatory; a natural power of movement cannot legimately be said to die, since that would mean the negation of nature itself. (10) and (11) strengthen the traditional truth that the divine has, at least, immortal life. That the divine is eternal is to be found in Thales' contemporary, Pherecydes. And it is subsequently a common assumption in the Presocratics. *Qua* causal power an *archē* is indestructible and eternal. But its embodiment in water, air, fire, etc., may undergo all sorts of changes because of its inherently infinite qualities.

Thales could be imagined to be arguing that we should believe about the gods no more than is warranted by reason; that there is only one universal God which reason can discover, although derivatively there are infinite number of gods as God - reference to the power of change and movement diffused in the cosmos. This God is Water, not the city's Apollo, Athena, Aphrodite or Aesculapius. He would then explain this by arguing that Water is found or is to be found in every natural thing everywhere, and it is the basis of the infinite changes and movements in the cosmos. It must accordingly be the principle and cause of everything. All qualitative changes must be traced to the extraordinary power of movement and qualitative indefiniteness by which it *differentiates* into every other phenomena. Magnesian stone and amber - apparently lifeless things - paradoxically present us with

a paradigm case of living divine power - motion. Everything else must have this power since everything is made of and from self-differentiating, eternally existing Water. It needs only be discovered. And, of course, *psuchē*, life-force, is nothing other than the power of movement. This very power of movement is the ruling mind of the cosmos. As for Apollo's oracle and his power of prophecy they are suspect. We can forecast the future simply by studying the living mechanisms of physical change and celestial movements.

In thus arguing, Thales would not be introducing a completely new god, far less would he be dispensing with god. He is merely arguing, by a manner of thinking set within assessible canons of reasoning and argumentation, from the evidence of phenomena to the existence and nature of a principle which explains all things as a cause. Such a principle is what he, but consistently with tradition, thinks God means. He implies by his argument that we can no more assume the existence of gods. We must argue for them. It is true that his God does not have the psychology or emotional appeal of the cultic gods; it does not feel anger or joy, and it is not an ethical agent; it is not jealous, but nor does It, like Zeus, dispense justice by the arbitrary and dictatorial hurling of thunderbolts. Reason is at work to purify as well as to confirm naive religious intuition by grounding it firmly in argument. Thales' God is obviously alive, in fact, full of life and energy, the vital source of all things, animate and inanimate, but in itself, it has no human form. At any rate, Thales' God satisfies the basic conception of the Greek god, viz., a supreme originative and/or causal power which is ultimately presupposed in an explanation of

the universe as a whole. And he indicates that the function of divine causality is expressible in terms of motion

3 Anaximander

With Anaximander (c.610-545B.C.), a fellow Milesian, younger contemporary and possibly also an associate of Thales, we have a somewhat clearer picture of a mind trying to trace not only the origins and growth of the universe(s), but also their characteristic features; their hidden mechanism, structure, and meaning. He does this with a remarkable genius of mathematical and logical enterprise when he presents the astronomical universe as spatial symmetries in which the sun, moon, and stars are a sequence of huge concentric fire rings around which is a central earth, with equal intervals between successive pairs in the sequences. There are indefinitely many co-existing or successive worlds[15] which are *kosmoi*; each *kosmos* comprising a sublunar world and an astronomical world (*ouranos*).[16] For him, the existence of *kosmoi* presupposes the existence and function a divine *archē* called the *apeiron*. According to Aetius (ii, 1, A17), the infinite heavens are, for Anaximander, equidistant god-worlds (or world-gods).

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15 It is not clear from the text which alternative is meant by Anaximander. See the following note.

16 At *de Caelo* (303b10) Aristotle uses "all the heavens" (*pantas tous ouranous*) as being surrounded by the *apeiron*. If, possibly, Theophrastus was relying on Aristotle for what Anaximander said, then, "*ouranoi*" in Aristotle could well mean 'spheres of the sun, moon, and stars (cf. op. cit. 298b9). In that case, it is the plurality of spatial as well as temporal parts that Anaximander may be talking about. This would be something not very different from our modern language of "solar" or "stellar" systems which, of course, are not meant as many worlds. Cf. Ps-Plutarch, *Stromateis*, 2 (DK12A10), Aetius II, 21, 1, where Anaximander talks of circles and spheres of the heavenly bodies.

The only extant passage of the book presumed to have been written by Anaximander and supposedly entitled "About Nature", is preserved in at least three versions by Simplicius, Hippolytus and P-s Plutarch[17] - all of them probably deriving their source from Theophrastus. Each of these versions contains some propositional variation absent in the others. But the main items, which are metaphysical, are that (a) the *archē* of all things is the *apeiron*, which is neither fire, air, water or earth;[18] (b) the *apeiron*, which pervades (*periechei*) the heavens, is eternal and ageless (*aidion kai agerō*); (c) from and into the nature of the *apeiron* all the *kosmoi* come to be and are destroyed; (d) generation and destruction happen as is due and proper, *kata chreōn*; for the sources (of generation and destruction) inevitably (literally, according to the arrangement of time, *kata tou chronou taxin*) pay penalty and retribution to one another for their injustice.

Many notes may be taken, many questions of interpretation and meaning may be raised about Anaximander's thesis, but I shall address a few which are relevant for my purposes. The *archē* is said to be "eternal" and "ageless". These indices repeat an epic formula comparable to *Ody.* v, 218, where it was said to Calypso; 'for he is mortal, whereas you are immortal and ageless (*athanatos kai agerō*).[19] The apparent implication is that the *apeiron* is divine and a living reality. Consequently, the many

17 Respectively, *in Aristotelis Physicorum* 24,13 = DK12A9; *Ref.* 1, 6, 1-2; *Strom.* 2 = DK12A10.

18 Some of the language we are dealing with are Peripatetic reconstructs, but they are not thereby necessarily a misrepresentation of what Anaximander means

19 Cf. *Il.*. II, 447

world-gods generated as a function of the *apeiron's* is consistent with the traditional derivation of all generated gods from a divine origin.[20]

"*Apeiron*", is a highly ambiguous word. It may mean "unlimited", "unbounded", "infinite" or "indefinite". But these are elliptical. Something may be unbounded either (i) temporarily, (ii) quantitatively or (iii) qualitatively.[21] On the other hand, *arche* means "rule", "source", "cause", "beginning", and if the story is true that Anaximander was the first to deploy the term *archē* for his system, it is all the more significant that the conception of the *apeiron* conceptually includes (i)-(iii). Thales' Water could not be limited by time, quality and quantity and still be the source and stuff of *all* sorts of things. But what exactly is the *apeiron*, and how does it function? The evidence is not clear enough. Simplicius has 'The *things* from which (*eks hōn*) there is generation *into these* (*tauta*)...' Earlier on, he has, '*from which nature* (*eks hēs hapanta*...reference to the *apeiron*) all the heavens and the worlds in them come to be...'[22] It has been argued that the plural relative phrase, *eks hōn*, refers to the opposite elements: hot, cold, dry, moist or to their embodiments in fire, air, earth, water; for these alone, being incompatible powers,

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20 Cicero's demur against the birth and the possibility of gods dying (*de Nat. Deo.* 1, 10 25) is misplaced. Greek gods are likewise born into immortality. And the chthonic deities of the mystery religions were immortal only in the sense that they continuously died and were reborn.

21 Aristotle, *Phy.* 203b18-20.

22 According to Jaeger (1947, p 20), "*phusis* denotes the act of *phunai* - the process of growth and emergence... But it also includes their source of origin - that from which they have grown and from which their growth is constantly renewed - in other words, the reality underlying the things of our experience. We find the same double meaning in the word *genesis*, a synonym for *phusis*.'

can be said to pay penalty to each other. Indeed, in his cosmology and meteorology, Anaximander noticeably uses "fire", "earth", "air", as formative powers, and his zoogony is based on the generative powers of water complimented by environmental factors arising from the powers in earth and fire. If this is the case, the warring, intertransformative function of the elements should not be taken to be any different from the function of the *apeiron* which is their underlying and ruling principle. Possibly, then, the *apeiron* is conceived in reaction to Thales' water-*archē*: if you assume that water is one element (some of) whose powers are incompatible with, or destructible by, one or more other elements, water fails to satisfy the minimum requirement of an *archē*. For an *archē* must, at least, be indestructible and ungenerated.[23] Such a conception of the *apeiron*, then, would be consistent with a belief that some temporarily, quantitatively, and qualitatively unbounded *power* must underlie as cause and principle, the sensible, definite, and mutually annihilating elements constituting the invariant (*kata chreōn*), periodic (*anakukloumenōn*) and contingent (*kata chronon*) *kosmoi* of our experience.

That the nature of such a power is divine is implied not only in our observation of the ascription of traditional epithets of divinity - immortality and agelessness - to the *apeiron*, but also by Aristotle at *Phy.* 203b5-15:

> ...for a natural thing is either a principle or from a principle (*archē*). But [the *apeiron*] is thought to be the principle of everything and to pervade everything (*periechein panta*) and to

[23] The possible destructibility of water need not follow for Thales, whose system is grounded on assumptions different from Anaximander's.

steer everything (*panta kubernan*)...Further, this is the divine (*to theion*); for (*gar*) it is immortal (*athanatos*) and indestructible (*anōlethron*), as says Anaximander and most of the physiologists.

In substance, the Aristotelian exegesis or report applies to all who posit *archē*, not just the *apeiron*, as the cause and principle of all things. The point beginning 'Further...' applies to most Presocratics including Anaximander. Notice in particular the inferential, 'And this is the divine'. Aristotle captures not just the argumentative spirit of the Presocratics, but, most importantly, the argumentation to the divine. The argument begins with a metaphysical premise that 'Everything is either a principle or from a principle'. If a reality is the *archē* of everything, it satisfies the minimum requirement of divinity by being a supreme originating and causal power which exists necessarily as that which is ultimately presupposed in an account of the cosmos. And we know that "immortality" and "indestructibility" are the stock epithets of the traditional gods, noting, in addition, that "immortality" is predicated of living agents, and that the life of the *apeiron*, like the life of Thales' *archē*, is specified as (eternal) motion (*kinēsin aidion*).[24] Briefly, Aristotle's version of Anaximander's argument, which is consistent with the one preserved in Simplicius and others, is that the divine is that which, by existing in eternal motion, generates and spatio-temporalises (*perai*) all other things; contingent things generated from the *apeiron* must die or be destroyed in time to be followed inviolably by birth or regeneration. In this the *apeiron* pervades

[24] Hippolytus, *Ref.* 1, 6, 2; Aristotle, *Phy.* 250b11; Simplicius *in Phys.* 24, 13 (DK 12a9)

and steers all things.

The characteristics of the function of the divine *apeiron* - inexorable periodicity in cosmos-formation, seasonal regularity in inter-elemental transformation, and the effecting calculable and constant geometric ratios of the heavenly bodies, are an expression of rationality. This is implied by its *steering* function. Anaximander seems to be making a point missed by Thales; that divine activity is not just any motion or simple self-differentiation, but rational and orderly motion. Also for Anaximander, the process of "birth", "generation", "death" and "destruction" constitute a metaphysics of "cosmic ethics"; for generation is a *pleonexia* as it results in elemental imbalance and becomes an "injustice", a threat to the equilibrium of the balance of forces. A penalty arises to be paid as is due and proper, and in due course. Disputed by Vlastos, Jaeger calls this a philosophical theodicy.[25] The causal powers of the divine *apeiron* are defined, regular, predictable, even rational but unemotional. Anaximander must have thought, consistently with traditional religion, that any plausible account of the cosmos must presuppose the necessary existence a divine, causal reality (*the apeiron* in eternal motion) as the vital ground of all existing things.

4 Anaximenes

Doxography ascribes some association of Anaximenes (c.546B.C) with Anaximander, his senior contemporary and fellow citizen (DL ii, 3). His *archē* is infinite Air in eternal motion:

> ...from it all things come to be and into it they are again dissolved (*analuesthai*). Just as our *psuchē* being air *sunkatei*

[25] Jaeger (1947); Vlastos (1970) in Allen and Furley.

us, so does breath and air *periechei* the whole world.

Anaximenes' recognition of, and interest in, analogical argument, and in air in particular, is further attested by Plutarch (*de Prim. frig.* 7,947F (DK13B1).[26] Moreover it was a common Greek belief that the *psuchē* is the breath of life. So there was already at hand for Anaximenes traditional material which had the potentiality for being re-worked into a metaphysical system. Air rather than water, seems to offer for Anaximenes the organic properties of movement and constitutivity (*sunkratiston*) if, as he seems to think, it is by air we live and are made. Therefore Air, infinite (*apeiron*) Air in eternal motion (*kinēsin aidion*),[27] he seems to argue, is the *phusis* of all things, hence, it is what we call god:

> He (sc. Anaximenes) [says that] Air is god: one must understand in the case of such descriptions the powers (*dunameis*) which interpenetrate the elements or bodies (Aetius 1,7,13).[28]

However this may be a stoic reinterpretation of Anaximenes, it is more than interesting that Aetius understands that by "god" the Presocratics (or the Greeks in general) mean the *powers* inhering

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26 '...for he says that matter which is compressed and condensed is cold, while that which is fine and relaxed (*chalaron*) - using this very word, is hot. Therefore, he said, the dictum is not an unreasonable one, that man releases both warmth and cold from his mouth; for the breath is chilled by being compressed and condensed with the lips, but when the mouth is loosened the breath escapes and becomes warm through its rarity.' The naivety and falsity of this experiment must be distinguished from the argumentative and philosophical motivation that inspired it.

27 Theophrastus *apud* Simplicius *in Phy.* 24, 26

28 See further Cicero *de Nat. Deo.* 1, 10, 26; Augustinus *de Civitate Dei* viii, 2

nature. Note also that the causality of the air-*archē* is expressed in terms of motion, here characterised by a pair of regular behaviour - rarefacation and condensation. From this pair of functional regularity other gods, things divine, and all other phenomena come to be and pass away.[29]

5 Xenophanes

Xenophanes, the 6th century Colophonian who migrated to settle in Sicily, brings the rationalism of his native Ionia to bear directly on the very conception of god:

> But mortals believe that the gods are *born* and have a garment and voice and shape like themselves (fr.14). But if oxen and horses and lions had hands, then, horses would have drawn gods with shapes like horses...(fr.15). Homer and Hesiod have told of the gods all that is shameful and reproach among men; stealing, adultery, cheating each other (fr.11).

Since Thales, the traditional representation of the originative causality of the parent-god as a biological procreator has been replaced by the idea of god as a power of motion. This motion-model of cosmological explanation entails the loss of most of the conceptual aspects of the human model so typical of the cultic gods. The emerging philosophical conception of the divine reality is rational, logical, and consequently, an abstractive one. This further entails the shedding of racial eccentricities in the conception of god. Consequently, the emerging universality in the conception of god makes some conceptual aspects of the human form incongruous, to say the least.

To start with, Xenophanes offers a rationalistic conception of

[29] Hippolytus, *Ref.*1, 7, 1. Gods and things divine will just be one or other form of Air.

impiety. Whereas traditionally, a pious person is one who practices the religious observances and submissively recognises the gods as traditionally conceived, now Xenophanes declares that it is even impious to conceive god uncritically and illogically:

> those who assert that the gods are born are as impious as those who say that they die; for in both cases it follows that the gods at some time fail to exist (Aristotle, *Rh.* 1399b6-9 = A12)

Xenophanes seems to think that the traditional conception of god is contradictory, i.e., if god is a causal power and the principle of all things. For then such a principle or cause can neither be born nor die, which will arise if it is subject to some other condition. Both the biological conception of god and the consequential limitations of its basic nature in time and space are logically and morally[30] inadmissible. Equally inadmissible is any conception of god which detracts from its basic nature as a causal power:

> if god is the most powerful of all (*kratiston*), he (sc. Xenophanes) says that it is suitable (*prosekein*) for him to be one (*hena*). For if they were two or more it would no longer be the most powerful and the best (*beltiston*). For each of the several being god would equally be such. *For this is what a god and god's capacity is - to have power* and not to be in someone's power (*kratein alla mekrateishai*), and to be most powerful of all. Hence, insofar as it is not more powerful, to that extent it is not god (ibid, *MXG*=A28)

Note especially, "for this is what a god and god's capacity is - to have power and not to be in someone's power", which confirms our hypothetical definition of god as basically a causal power conceived in a set of conditions of which supremacy is one.

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[30] Xenophanes' use of "*prosekein*" (below) in his conceptual critique of god as traditionally understood has both logical and moral connotations in context.

Xenophanes seems to argue, that there can be only one god, if "god" means just the cause or principle of *all things*, which entails that it is the most powerful of all things. For imagine two such principles in existence. Then, the power of each will limit and be limited by the other, since both will presumably be limited by a condition of limitation, which will then be greater and more powerful than the gods. But it is logically and morally reprehensible that the principle of all things, should be so conceived. Hence:

> There is one god greatest among gods and men and in no way similar to mortals in body and thought (*heis theos...en megistos...noēma*); fr. 23). All [of divine power] sees, thinks, hears (fr.24).

Two things are noteworthy. First, Homeric and traditional Greek piety had imagined the gods as human beings in an ideal state of existence. But the traditional concept of divine ideality had not been carried to its logical conclusion: the gods are only more so and so than men; for instance, they are born, like men, although once born, live forever thereafter. For Xenophanes, the perfection and sublimity of god are not a matter of degree. In body and thought, god is incommeasurably dissimilar to man. God is not a being with eyes and ears and brains, but the very principle of perception and intellection. Xenophanes is consistently arguing to the basic conception of god as the principle of all things, and from this to god's incommeasurable difference from any other class of things.

Secondly, the apparent distinction between one greatest god and

other gods, may be interpreted in at least two ways. (i) It is plausible to think that the supremacy of the one God is being distinguished from a plurality of gods rhetorically supposed to exist. From this point of view, it is an argument to this effect: *if* there are many gods, one and only one will be the greatest. But of course all gods are god, since "god" simply is "supreme causal power" - and there is only one such power. (ii) On the other hand, it is arguable that "gods" means those locally embodied bits of "God". Since (i) and (ii) are not necessarily incompatible, it is therefore possible that Xenophanes means by "God" the universal power and principle of the cosmos, and by "gods" those local bits of one and the same God. This apparently inconclusive view seems supported in the following:

> About the gods, there is no leadership among them, for it is not holy (*hosion*) for any of the gods to have a master (*despozesthai*) and none of them stands in need of anything at all.[31]

By definition as a causal power the existence of gods entails no relations of superiority and subordination among themselves. It is illogical that god *qua* causal power should have a master; what can we make of a causal power being a servant? Nor is it logical or appropriate to imagine god *qua* causal power as a master of a causal power. For god *qua* causal power is god. Hence all gods are god. The theological "politics" between Zeus the king of the gods and subordinate gods, is illogical and untrue. The "holy" and "fitting" may be in use here as comprehensive concepts to intimate the ethical and logical sublimity of God. Divine power or mastery is absolute. And as it is diffused through the universe

[31] Cf. Euripides, *Hercules Furens* , 1341-6.

(*pasi sunphuei* = A35) its absoluteness entails every condition of self-fulfilment, compared to human mastership which depends on something else for its fulfilment. But Xenophanes' God shares, at least, one thing with the Zeus of *Il.* 1, 530:[32] It 'shakes (*kradanei*) without toil, all things by the will of its mind' (*nous*, frr. 25, 26).

In short, a true conceptualisation of god must represent divine power as the totality of all conditions, and absolute rationalty. Only then can God be said to motivate with mind all things without toil. For fatigue implies subjection to condition. As a supreme cause that entails all conditions, God is absolute self-fulfilment, and cannot, for this reason, itself be said to change or move,[33] since change and movement are conditional activities: there must be a place to move to, a time to change in, an end to change for, etc. This is impossible, for Xenophanes. For God "coheres with", or "penetrates" all things (*sunphue tois pasi*, A35) - just as a cause coheres with that which is caused. It is the power that must of necessity exist identically in all things (...*homoios huparchein anankē pasi to kratein.* A31), and visible in all aspects of things (*kai pasi tois morios aisthētikon* =A32). Yet, although conscious and alive - living in the quite motionless life of eternity instead of the agitated life of immortality - it does not breathe (*mē mentoi anapnein* =A1).

We have noted that since Thales, the causality of the divine *arche* has been specified in terms of motion. Anaximander and

32 cf., Aeschylus, *Supp.*, 96-103.

33 Cf. Epicharmus, B1. 'In Homer, the god's quickness of movement is construed as a veritable token of divine power', Jaeger (1947). See *Il.* II, 17, 786; xxiv, 340ff. *Ody.*, 1 ,96ff.

Anaximenes have intimated that the motion of divine causality is rational. Xenophanes carries this to a higher level of sophistication, by further specifying that God's motion is the immovable motion of thinking, i.e., movement by the will of the mind. This, with some qualification, is also the famous conclusion in Aristotle's theology of *Meta* xii. Xenophanes would seem to have reasoned to the conclusion that only by postulating an embodied mind as the fundamental causal power could we hope to have a sufficient explanation of the structure and meaning of the cosmos as we find it.

In conceiving God as pure causality and a principle, Xenophanes carries the idea of god to a conceptual point where he suggests, negatively, that motion or rest, limited and unlimited, and all physical processes are inapplicable to the nature of God.[34] But although god's sublimity and perfection have been shown to entail all conditions - eternal existence, self-identity, and universal consciousness - God also has a body. Xenophanes has already proclaimed that God has a body and mind, only a body and mind in no way resembling mortals. Sphericality of bodily form is also, for Xenophanes, entailed by God's sublimity, perfection and absoluteness.[35] Hence:

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34 A32, A35. Simplicius *in Phy.* 22, 22ff. = A31. *MXG* 977b18 = A28. Jaeger (1947), relying on Aristotle's statement that Xenophanes had no idea of the distinction between Parmenides' logical and therefore finite conception of the One or of Melissus' material, and hence infinity conception of the One, but looked at the whole heaven and declared that the one is God, dismisses *MXG* as inauthentic, at least, with respect to the Xenophanic part, which he finds inconsistent with Aristotle's report. I am not convinced by Jaeger's argument. Certainly Aristotle's statement is different from that which appears in the *MXG*; but I do not see with Jaeger that they are inconsistent.

35 The sphericality of God's body is not at all impossible. KRS dismiss it as beyond the fragments, although it is well attested in the doxography;

...looking at the whole heaven (*ton holon ouranon*), he (sc. Xenophanes) says that The One is God;[36]...The principle (*tēn archēn*) is one (*mian*) or the whole of existence (*to on kai pan*).[37]

KRS write that "heaven" here cannot mean Aristotelian first heaven. They continue; 'This clearly implies that God is identical with the world,' which is what Theophrastus seems to have assumed' (i.e. according to Simplicius, *Phy.*, 22, 26, which is taken from Theophrastus). 'But', they add, 'Aristotle must be wrong here: how could God be motionless if it is identical with a world which is itself implied to move?' A plausible answer to this paradox of "unmoved mover" is that the world *as a whole* cannot be said to move or change. Moreover, God, conceived as a principle of motion cannot itself be in mobility, possibly becoming - in the process - other than it must be. This does not prevent it from being that by which things *in* the cosmos move. KRS are

Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 1, 224; A35; Alexander of Aphrodisias, Simplicius *in Phy.*, 22, 22; A31; Hippolytus. *Ref.* 1,14; A33. The difficulty of its acceptability stems from the fragment on the dimensions of the earth: 'The upper end of the earth is seen at our feet contacting the air. But the lower end arrives at the infinite' (*gaiēs men tode peras anō para possin horatai ēeri prosplazon, to katō, d' es apeiron hikneitai*, Fr. 28, Achill., Isagoge 4, p34). Cf. Empedocles fr.39; Aristotle's *de Caelo*, 294a21; A47. First of all, in Xenophanes "*apeiros*" is associated with "*to mē on*", and it reads like "empty nothingness". Secondly, "*hikneitai*" invites a sense of termination or destination. Finally "*tode peras anō*" parallels "*to katō de.*" So that if we read the former as "the upper end", it seems natural to read the latter as "the lower end". We then have a finite earth whose upper limit intersects the air while its lower limit comes to the infinite nothingness which borders it. The upper limit of the air, ether, is in turn bordered by the infinite nothingness. The structure of the world can then be spherical.

36 Aristotle, *Meta.*,986B21.

37 Simplicius *in Phy.*, 22, 26.

right, however, in suggesting that, 'It is probable that although Xenophanes' god is *not a direct* development from the cosmological tradition, yet it is to some extent based on the Milesian idea of a divine substance which, in the case of Thales and Anaximenes, was regarded as somehow permeating objects in the world and giving them life and movement' (p.172). My emphasis. The indirection is simply that Xenophanes does not expound a cosmogony. His God is a principle and a cause but not an originating power. But as in preceding thought, so here too; divine power is embodied power. Consequently, insofar as Xenophanes did not represent divine power in any kind of body, *to holon*", "*to pan*", "*to hen*" must mean "the cosmos". The scope of divine power, then, is the world, its body is the physical stuff of the world. As in Anaximander, so in Xenophanes, this is constituted by the elements - fire, air, water and earth, from which all things, organic and inorganic, including the celestial spheres and the meteorological system are constituted.[38]

Such is Xenophanes' God - a truly universal God available to all mankind rather than to individual races. Nor is it limited to an animal race. To do this he had to abstract the basic idea of god as a principle or pure causality.[39] This God Xenophanes exhorts

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38 See Simplicius. *in Phy.*,189,1; fr.30; S Genav. *in Iliadem* xx1,196; Ps-Plutarch, *Strom.4* (DK21 A32); Aetius II, 20, 3). And Xenophanes, like Anaximander, also believes in a sort of cycle of change among the elemental forces, and their consequent effect upon all generable things: '...All mankind is destroyed whenever the earth is carried down into the sea and becomes mud; then there is another beginning of coming to be, and this foundation happens for all the worlds (*kosmoi*)'. Hippolytus, *Ref.*,1,14,5. KRS interestingly suggest (op.cit.178) that "*Kosmoi*" probably means "world-arrangements"

39 That Xenophanes' apprehension of god is by a combination of empiricism and logical intuition is, hopefully, clear. In an elegy, he

men to 'praise in hymns with pious myths and pure words', and to pray to (B1).

6 Heraclitus

Heraclitus (c.540-480B.C.), the greatest Ionian sage according to the estimation of some scholars, is said to have flourished at the end of the sixth century. He is believed to have written a book which began:

> And of this eternal *logos* (*tou de logou toud' eontos aei*)[40] men prove to be uncomprehending both before they have heard it and once they have heard it. For, although, everything comes about as a result of this *logos*, they are like inexperienced men when they experience both the words and the deeds of the sort which I recount by dividing each thing in accordance to its *nature* (*phusis*) and saying how it is; but other men do not notice what they do when they are awake, just as they are oblivious of things when they are asleep (fr.1).

praises the cultivation of the intellect, '*sophiē*' as compared to the *brawn* (B2, 11-22). And he believes in the progressive character of knowledge: 'Not from the outset, indeed, has all been shown by the gods to the mortals. Yet as time goes on they find, when searching, the better' (Fr. 18, Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 1.8, 2, *Florilegium* 29, 41). We can only, as we accumulate experience, come to know better but not the final truth about the gods and everything else. But certainly no amount of empirical experience could lead Xenophanes to this highly rational conceptualisation of god. Therefore the reading of Xenophanes as an empiricist must be qualified. We do not know about what Xenophanes said at B35 'Let these things be opined as resembling the truth', but he seems to have distinguished between "truth" or "reality" and "opinion" or "belief". At B36 the incomplete fragment reads, 'All appearances which exist for mortals to look at...' It is possible that B36 is a discourse about contingent things which, for Xenophanes, may be the changing and hence unknowable as opposed to the self-abidingness of their essential nature which he would call God.

40 Reading *aei* with *toud' eontos* which relates to *logou*, rather than with the following *azunetoi*

Logos, from the verb "*legein*" - "to speak", ordinarily means "word", and has cognate meanings such as "speech", "account", "doctrine", "theory". When we listen to someone we ordinarily listen not to him as a person but to his words or speech. Heraclitus could not be unaware of this. If, therefore, he is emphatically biding us not to listen to him but to *the logos*, he implies that he is a medium for the words or speech or, better still, for the doctrine or theory which he is about to expouse. In other words, the eternal *logos* is not Heraclitus' subjective spurt, but a symbol for an abiding, objective truth or reference. Indeed, in Heraclitus, the double meaning of words is a lapidiary policy of writing, and we will find a one-sense interpretation of *logos* as "account" i.e., "verbal account" inadequate to the comprehension of his philosophy.[41] We shall see that when he promises to mark out the nature of each thing by the *logos* which is common to everything (fr.114), he means to define universally, and also to identify by that definition, the objective *phusis* of phenomena. For the *logos* is common to everything in the concrete sense defined by the *logos*. It is true that in fr.108, *logos* is just "doctrine", "discourse" or "speech": 'none of all those whose doctrines (*logous*) I have heard of comes as far as to recognise that *the* Wise (*sophon*) is separated from everything'. But the phrase "*eis ton auton logon*" of fr. 31, can hardly mean "into the same account" ("speech", or "doctrine"). There, it means "order", "proportion", "ratio", or "measure" - and in a concrete sense. And

41 Contra Barnes (1982, p 59). Those sceptical about the metaphysical realist meaning of *logos* must be embarrassed by fragment 52 where Time or Eternity is personified. Cf. Sextus Empiricus *Adversus Mathematicos*, x, 216.

the concrete embodiment of measure, etc., is identified with a cosmic ever-living Fire. Therefore, I shall follow tradition in distinguishing two senses of *logos*: (i) the ordinary meaning of *logos* - speech, account, discourse, or doctrine, etc., and, (ii), a technical meaning of *logos*, with a capital "L", which means "Reason", "Measure", "Proportion", "Ratio" or - what is more accurate in context - "Rational Measure".

One fruitful way of approaching Heraclitus is to identify what he saw his predecessors as failing in, and felt called upon to fulfil or correct. It appears that, like his predecessors, but much more elaborately and vociferously, he saw himself as a "crusader" of some truth whose articulation will guide the putting of things in a systematic perspective. First, religion, the central feature of traditional or mythological explanations and practices must undergo a "liturgic" cleansing;

> They purify by staining themselves with other blood, as if one were to step into mud in order to wash off mud. But a man would be thought mad if any of his fellow men should perceive him acting thus. Moreover, they talk to these statues as if one were to hold conversation with houses, in ignorance of the nature of both gods and heroes (fr.5). They pray to statues of the gods that do not hear them as if they heard, and do not give just as they cannot ask (fr.128). If they are gods, why do you lament them? If you lament them you must no longer regard them as gods (fr. 127). Night ramblers, magicians, Bacchants, Meanads, Mystics; the rites accepted by mankind in the mysteries are unholy performance (fr.14).

'They do not know what gods and heroes [*really*] are'. They are certainly not the anthropomorphic gods of Homer and Hesiod, and if not, the whole worshipful approach to the gods must be

radically revised at the altar of reason. But nor is it true, as some philosophers think, that this universe, as an orderly system (*kosmos*) was *originated* by some god (fr. 30). God, in the true sense, is the eternal expression and embodiment of the orderly and systematic changes so characteristic of phenomena:

> God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, satiety and hunger - [(all this together]) - is the God; he undergoes alteration in the way that fire, when it is mingled with perfumes, is called after the scent of each perfume (fr.67).

Yet, although this should mean that the physical universe is the embodiment of god, Heraclitus symbolises or rather identifies the primary embodiment of god with ever-living Fire:

> This order (*kosmos*) - the same of all - did none of the gods nor men make, but it always was, and is, and shall be an Ever-living Fire (*pyr aeizōon*) incandescing in measures (*haptomenon metra*) and extinguishing in measures (*aposbennymenon metra*, fr.30). All things are an equal exchange (*antamoibē*) for fire and fire for all things as gold for goods and goods for gold (fr.90). Fire's turnings; first sea, and of sea *one half* is earth, *the half* prester (lightning or fire)...earth is liquified as sea and is *measured* (*metreitai*) so as *to form the same measure* (*eis to auton logon*) fr.31).

The word translated "order" is elliptical and ambiguous. It may mean (1) world-order, (2) the socio-political order or (3) order at all levels of existence including (1) and (2). Since, Heraclitus has promised to mark out the nature of each thing by the *Logos*, there is reason to think that (3) is intended here, and is favoured by the phrase, "the same of all". "Gods" here must mean gods as popularly conceived and/or god as originator of cosmos, if Heraclitus' own belief in God is to make sense. No god originated

this eternal world-order, nor did any Lycurgus invent the socio-political order, which is a microcosm of the eternal, orderly world. But why *pyr*? That Greek word translates "fire". Possibly, Heraclitus saw in fire a paradigmatic instance of his cosmic thesis - the Law of self-preserving measure in constant change. Given that he makes extensive use of fire in numerous other cosmic and psychic fragments, it is more problable that, whatever its symbolic value, he does not exclude a literal meaning of it. On the other hand, it is arguable that *pyr* did not always mean fire. It is arguably not as fire that Philolaus used it. Nor does *pyr* mean fire for Anaxagoras, as Aristotle stated when he observed that Anaxagoras employs *pyr* in the sense of ether - the finest and remotest layers of air (*de Caelo* 302b4). Hence it is not at all clear that *pyr* should equal "fire" in Heraclitus.[42] In the 6th century, A.D, e.g., an author could qualify the *pyr* of Heraclitus (and Hippasus) by saying that 'By *pyr*, however, they do not mean the flame (*phloga*)'.[43] Others suggest something like "air",[44] and still others understand *pyr* as "ether-like body" (*to aitherion sōmc*)[45]. More importantly, it is just not *pyr* but ever-*living pyr*. The biological conception of the cosmos as a living entity is the commonest theme in Presocratic thought. So "ever-living" is here a real qualification, and corresponds to "ever-being" (*Logos*) of fragment 1. The decisive significance of the "ever-living" qualification comes up when we find that the

42 The literal taking of *pyr* as fire in Greek philosophical discourse is probably later than Heraclitus - perhaps a stoic interpretation of him, from which is derived the doctrine of *ekpyrosis* (world-conflagration).

43 Joannes Philoponus *ad Arist. de Anima* I. 2, p. 83, 18.

44 Sextus Empiricus *adv. Math.* x, 233; Cf. also ix, 360.

45 Stobaeus, *Ecl. phy.* I, 5, p.178.a.o.). See KRS p.188-189.

Heraclitean *Pyr* exhibits the closest affinity to life[46] and thought (cf. fr.118); and etherial fire is in Greek tradition both divine and the place for souls.[47] Therefore, I will maintain the literal translation "fire", while urging that *"pyr"* be understood as a sort of life-warm etherial stuff.

Now, whereas fr.1 talks about ever-being *Logos* as that by which each thing will be defined and/or identified as to its nature, fr.30 talks about ever-living Fire as the material basis of this world-order. Accordingly, some link between "ever-being *Logos"* and "ever-living Fire" is implied. Heraclitus intimates that the cosmic processes and changes (symbolised) in the perpetual extinguishings and incandescing of Fire, are a cyclical life of death, birth, and rebirth. The eternity of cosmic life expressed in "ever-being" or "ever-living" means that by "extinguishing" Heraclitus means not "dissolution" or "extinction", but "renewal", or "self-renewal." Hence, "extinguishing" and "incandescing" constitute an "exchange" (fr.90), or "turnings", i.e., "transformations" (fr.31). The fragment, 'all that we see when awake is dead' (fr. 21), would probably mean that things around us are "renewing themselves" all the time. This self-renewal is said to be *in measures* (fr.31). Thus in saying that 'all things are an exchange for fire and fire for all things, just as gold for goods and goods for gold' (fr.90), Heraclitus is, again, conveying the idea that a certain measure or value remains constant though the form assumed is different. There is, in other words, an eternal identity in the constant change. Cosmic life, in its ever-flowing but regular mutations, is

46 Partly as to its self-mobility; self-mobility is, generally in Greek thought, associated with life.

47 Again, KRS p.188-189.

constituted by the same measure or value of intelligible structure and underlying stuff. And Fire's turnings (fr. 31), show a measurable ratio of elemental balance in the physical constitution of the universe: Fire-><-Water-><-Earth-><-Fire (Prester).

The arrows are changing and measured *tendencies*: Fire is half incandescing, half precipitating (extinguishing) as rain (and/or air) into water; one half of water is evaporating back to nourish Fire; the other half is solidifying as earth; earth is half liquefying, and half burning fire. Measure goes for measure. The cycle is complete; 'the Way Up and the Way Down are the same', i.e., circular and continuous: 'Common [i.e. Fire or *Logos*] is the beginning and the end of the circumference of the circle' (fr.103). The elements are joined up in an ordered balance, each instantiating contrary tendencies to change.

This internal contrariety inherent in Fire, and therefore in all things,[48] does not merely keep the cosmic elements in balance; it is, as I understand it, the principal idea in Heraclitus' philosophy,

[48] This is only a *tendency* to change contrariwise, not a coinstantiation of contrary phenomena. There is only one thing, Ever-living Fire, which is at once tending to die into water and to remain fire. Fire is not at once also water. When, therefore. Heraclitus says 'Hesiod is the teacher of very many, he did not understand day and night; for they are one' (fr.57), the father of philosophy of change is not asserting that when it is day it is also night. Rather that day and night are constituted by the same "stuff" and principle which carries the orderly but contrary tendencies to change, now into day, now into night. What is day if not night in the process of passing away, and night if not day passing away? What is hunger except satiety in the process of passing away, satiety but hunger disappearing? The waxing of summer is measured by the waning of winter and vice versa. Although he was expousing the *Logos*, Heraclitus was not talking about nouns and predicates, and how they are coinstantiated, but about how phenomena, which incidentally happen to succeed, or to be continuous with, each other in contrary forms, are constituted by a certain principle of measure and stuff.

and the very principle of all changes, the *Logos*. Ordinarily we cannot apprehend one form of the contrariety without the other; 'they would not know the name of justice' (right) if the opposite did not exist (fr.23). We can be sure, then, that by the *Logos* we can apprehend the essential unity of all things. It is this principal idea for which he sought numerous examples to demonstrate that contraries are in essential unity - which does not mean that they are identical. This idea of essential unity in difference is called 'the invisible harmony which is superior to the visible' (fr.54), 'the *nature* that loves to hide'; (fr.123) "the back-stretched connexion" (*palintropos harmonie*$\bar{}$), as in the bow and the lyre (fr.51). Heraclitus, I believe, is trying to explain the apparent perpetuity of phenomenal flux by the idea of internal contrariety as common to all things. Thus he calls this dynamic formula the Common, but also Justice (*dike*$\bar{}$) as well as Strife:

> One ought to understand that The Common (*ho zenos*) is War (*polemon eonta*) and Justice (*dike*$\bar{}$*n*)[49] and Strife (*erin*) and that all things come about by way of strife and necessity (*chreo*$\bar{}$*mena*). War is both king and father of all...(fr. 80)

Chreo$\bar{}$*mena* - the "necessity" of measured change, is further brought out in the following fragments:

> the sun will not transgress its measures (*metra*) or else the Furies, the helpers of Justice (*dike*$\bar{}$)[50] will bring it back (lit. will find it out, fr.94) It is utterly decreed by Fate (Fr.137). Every creature is driven to pasture with a blow (Fr.11).

49 See *Craty.* 412c for an exercise in the etymology of *Dike*$\bar{}$

50 In Anaximander, *Dike*$\bar{}$ implies a balance of the cosmic elements. Injustice refers to disequilibrium of the elemental stock arising from their periodic generative encroachment upon one another, and that is an injustice to be redressed in the course of time.

Its "measures" suggests the sun's measure of velocity, its prescribed orbit and the prescribed direction in it. *Dikē*, the Greek word for the goddess of Justice, has here a double meaning. On the one hand it means the contrast to the crime to be prosecuted by the Furies. On the other hand it means also Fate, and so the "law" of motion defined by the *Logos*. Those "natural laws" will compel the sun to return to its orbit and velocity if a change of its measures were possible at all. So the *Logos* carries with it the notion of Justice and Right. "Necessity" epitomises a fusion of physical and moral propriety, of description and prescription:[51] if the "law of measure for measure" is to hold, any deviation from it would not be merely puzzling to the intellect but also shocking to the moral sense. Astronomical conditions and ethical considerations are not yet distinguished. The *Logos* of compensating measure will hold all things to their places and natural courses.

Heraclitus surely thought that there is order in the universe and most probably saw this cosmic order as an endless *process*, indeed, as a fundamentally necessary and immutable,[52] but *rational* process. Hence, the eternity of the *Logos* and its identification with Wisdom:

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51 The same fusion is to be found in Anaximander, and possibly in the Pythagorean idea that life is continuous with the universe. It is, of course, implicit in all the Presorcatic systems.

52 The philosopher of Becoming is as much a philosopher of Being. Plato's representation of Heraclitus' thesis in the *Theaetetus* as leading to sensationalism is either an exaggeration or a caricature. Possibly he took Cratylus seriously as a geniune exponent of Heraclitus' thesis of change. Change is fundamental to Heraclitus, but change is arrested in Rational Measure, i.e., in the calculable *Logos*.

for the wise being that is One knows the plan according to which everything is directed through everything (*einai gar hen to sophon epistathai gnōmēn, hokē kubernatai panta dia pantōn* - fr.41).[53] That which alone is wise is one; it is willing and unwilling to be called Zeus (*hen to sophon mounon legesthai Zēnos*, fr.32). Thunderbolt steers the world (fr.64).

In a direct continuation of fr.64, Hippolytus comments as follows:

Heraclitus calls the eternal fire "thunderbolt", but calls this fire also capable of reason and the cause of the arrangment of the universe (*Ref.* ix. 10, 6).

"Thunderbolt" is here the allegorical name for the ever-living Fire, or the *Logos*. Strictly, it is not the thunderbolt that steers the world but the god which bolts it. And thunderbolt is the traditional weapon of Zeus. Note the pun of "*zēnos*" on "*zēn*" - Zeus on life. The passage may be interpreted in various ways. But this is also plausible: The life of the traditional godhead of Greek religion, Zeus, is immortal. He is also far-seeing, and wields a thunderbolt, often arbitrarily. Cosmic Fire too is ever-living and rational, and to that extent wills to be called Zeus. It is unwilling to be called Zeus because its life is unborn, eternal, its rationality is complete; it imparts its power in the cosmos, i.e., "wields a thunderbolt", but in a completely rational way. The connection of The Wise One with Zeus is clear evidence that Heraclitus has in mind divine Reason, and Fire is his *archē* because it shows picturesquely the measured rationality and constant, generative diffferentiation of the divine.

The systematic, intelligible but vital structure of the universe is, as it were, the external and objective counterpart of human life.

53 That reading of fr. 41 both resolves the "infintive + accusative" syntax, and fits, at least, part of the meaning of ffr. 32, 64, 114.

The activity of cosmic life can be formulated as objectively assessible laws. These laws are as descriptive as normative, and constitute the standard of human life, and the laws in human society:

> For those who speak with mind (*zun nōi*) cannot but strengthen themselves with that which is *common to all* (*zunōi*), just as a city makes itself strong with its *laws* (*nomōi*), and much strongly than this. For all human laws are nourished by the one divine law (*hupo enos tou theiou*); for this rules (*kratei*) as far as it will, and suffices for all, and prevails in everything (B114). Therefore one must follow that which is common to all. But although the law is universal, the majority live as if they had understanding peculiar to themselves (fr.2). The people should fight for the law (*nomos*) as if for their city-wall (fr.44). To obey the will of *the one* is also law (fr.33).

Again, notice the pun of *zun nōi* (with reason) on *zunōi* (*common*), and the suggestion that speaking with reason or intelligence is strengthening oneself on that which is common, namely, the intelligible structure underlying the cosmos. Heraclitus, like Xenophanes, is only partly an empiricist. He has confidence in the senses, as providing us with the raw data of experience. But he has no distrust of reason either. For him reason is not a mere continuation of the process of sensation; it discovers more in reality than the senses can reveal. Nor is the *Logos* a mere abstraction; it is the vital law of controlled change. Law, Order and Justice, are given a metaphysical dignity and basis; they are not arbitrary superficiality, but sink deep into the fiery essence of things such as the unaided eye, the barbaric *psuchē*, cannot fathom: ('the eyes and ears are bad witnesses for men if they have *barbaric psuchē'*, fr.107). The sanction and

validity of community law and organisation are to be located not in the finite wisdom or the arbitrary fiat of a Lycurgus, but according to conformity to the fundamental laws governing the cosmos, laws which are discernible by reason. This cosmic basis of law is foreshadowed in fr. 1 which calls the universe a *kosmos* - an orderly system.

Heraclitus was not only interested in the question of communal duty, and socio-political conditions of life. Personal life directed from the knowledge and control of the all-important *psuchē*, is central to his interest for two main reasons: (i) it carries an interpretation of the phenomena of the outer world into the inner states and experiences of consciousness so far as to say that "life" or "death", "wake" or "sleep" correspond to fire or water, (or earth); and the latter can be understood from the former; (ii) it enables the individual not only to understand and accept the terms and conditions of life, but also wilfully to attune oneself to the universal order of which one's life is a microcosm, and this - for a virtuous and happy life. Most of the *psuchē* fragments express a physiology of states of *psuchē* which can be understood only as subtle versions of the physiology of the ever-living Fire, which is also a rational agent. *Psuchē* is intermediate between fire and water. Thus, it can either aspire to the *dryness* of intellectual and moral virtue, or sink below into the *wetness* of bodily pleasure:

> From the *Logos* with which they are most intimately connected all the time, they are *separated*, and those things which they encounter daily seems to them strange; immortals are mortal and mortals are immortals. A *dry soul is wisest and the best* (fr.118). A man, when he gets drunk, is led stumbling along by an immature child, not knowing where he is going, *having his*

psuchē wet (fr.117). Moderation is the greatest virtue, and wisdom is to speak the truth and to act in accordance with nature (fr.112). If happiness lay in bodily pleasures, we would call oxen happy when they find vetch to eat. It is delight or death for *psuchē* to become wet (fr.77).

These fragments leave no doubt that the *psuchē* is an agent of intelligence or wisdom and morality. A dry soul is not only the *wisest,* it is also the *best.* "Best" is ambiguously either aesthetic, moral or both. The language of dry and wet soul only shows the chemical affinity between *psuchē* and the fiery essence of all things. It is not clear what moderation means. It may involve a certain balance between fire and moisture, or at least, keeping the *psuchē* from being wet, since a dry soul is the wisest. And if a man feels some pleasure by drinking, at the same time he loses strength and knowledge and gets closer to death. On the other hand, 'those who speak with insight/wisdom (*nōi*) cannot but strengthen themselves with that which is common'. Heraclitus distinguishes wisdom from knowledge in such a way as to suggest that wisdom is *operative knowledge* based on the grasp of the fundamental meaning of things. Its product is virtuous action, noble speech or thought. Complete wisdom is, perhaps, to be identifed with God and God only, while to become a god is presumably to be re-absorbed into the *Logos* of the ever-living Fire.[54] In general, it will be a reasonable inference to conclude that for Heraclitus, a dry soul is a necessary and sufficient condition for virtue, and moderation might be a degree of psychic

[54] And some fragments express pessimism as far as the possibility of grasping the *Logos* is concerned; frr.18, 22, 86. Ultimately, the wisest man will appear an ape in relation to God (fr. 83). The way of man has no wisdom, but the way of God has (fr.78).

dryness. The drier and closer our *psuchē* is to the fiery essence of all things, the more morally and intellectually virtuous we are.

Heraclitus probably believes that *psuchē* is an immortal principle of life, if he believes that we live a perpetually renewed life phased out in perpetual alternation of forms of life in direct correspondence to the cosmic ever-living Fire: 'it (sc. the *psuchē*) is the *same thing in us* which is living and dead, awake and sleeping, young and old; for the latter having changed become the former, and these again having changed, become the latter' (fr.88). '*Psuchai* smell of Hades' (fr.98) because, again, life (*psuchē*) and death (*Hades*) are different forms (or names) of one and the same principle of life (cf. frr.15,26,48,76). These fragments tell no story of personal survival after death. But some eschatological moral is involved in keeping a dry soul and becoming wise. It seems to be our moral duty in life to make efforts to engage in fiery activity. For instance, one can aim at a virtuous end of life - as by fighting for your nation; 'for gods and men honour those slain in battle' (fr.24). 'Souls slain in war are purer than those [that perish] in diseases' (fr.136). 'The better the death, the better the rewards' (fr.25). Such souls can be said 'to rise and become watchful guardians of life and death' (fr.63). Perhaps this means that such souls will be one with the ever-incandescing part of cosmic Fire.

But the prospect of inuring oneself to the common *Wisdom*[55] of

[55] '...yet the many live as if they had a wisdom of their own. They are enstranged (lit. differentiated) from that with which they have most constant intercourse' (fr. 72). 'As a result they follow the poets and take the crowd as their teacher, not knowing that the majority are bad and the good are few' (fr. 104), and even 'the best of them chose one thing above all others, immortal glory among mortals, while most of them are glutted like beasts' (fr. 29). 'One should quench wantomness more than

which he is a part, involves other noble activities beyond active martial prowess and keeping physically healthy. True happiness does not lie in bodily pleasures (fr.4), or fitness, but in wisdom. People must follow in the steps of Heraclitus by searching out themselves (fr.101); by "purging" themselves of conceit (fr.46) and by yearning for the "sun of education", since it is given to all men to *know* themselves and to have wisdom (fr.116). Thus for Heraclitus, it takes more than the orgiastic ecstacy of a Corybant, Bacchant or Maenad, to be happy and to be spiritually saved. Self-knowledge is self-fulfilling rationality amounting to insight into the *Logos* and the realisation that the fundamental nature of all life is a permanent unity of eternal inter-transformation of temporal contrarieties, such that need and satiety invariably alternate (fr.65), and that it is no good for men to get all they wish (fr.110); for it is sickness that makes health pleasant, evil good, hunger plenty, weariness rest (fr.111), war peace How could one know justice if there were no injustice? (fr.23). So that where the common herd complain, the wise man will cheerfully accept; where they seek to avoid hardship, he will bear it; where they flinch at pain he will welcome it. He will also understand that that which differs from itself is in agreement; harmony consists in opposing tension, like that of a bow and a lyre (fr.51); that at any rate war is the king and father of all things, and that it has revealed some as gods, others as men, some it has made slaves, others free. That is to say, without war, not only will peace elude us, but also everything else; our very existence, would be impossible. A wise slave will acquiesce in his status, knowing that

conflagration' (fr. 43) Cf. fr. 131). 'One man to me is worth ten thousand if he is the best' (fr. 49).

the inevitability of change (of status) has been prescribed by the divine law of the *Logos*. The wise will accept his human condition, namely, his mortality as a necessary contrapositive in the fundamental laws expressed in the cosmic *Logos*. For mortals too will become gods; 'immortals are mortals, and mortals are immortal; each living the death of the other, and dying their life (fr. 118).

Thus the whole problem of evil is dissolved, for Heraclitus, in the all-encompassing cosmic Justice, which is identifiable with God. For God is above good and bad: to God all things are beautiful, good and just; but men have assumed some things to be unjust and others just (fr.102). All seeming evils and imperfections of existence contribute to the hidden attunement, and completeness of reality. In the end, it is hard to fight with one's heart's desire (fr.85); for the conflict between desire and reason is part of the cosmic struggle of opposites. But it appears that our whole effort at becoming happy, i.e., by keeping a dry *psuchē* may, at some time, be overtaken by the Way Down. We will then become a (toy) game in the hands of child-Time (*aiōn*), the kingship of Life (fr.52).[56]

To summarise. Our reconstruction of Heraclitus' thought began with his critique of the traditional ceremonial representation and worship of gods and heroes. For him, the statuary representation

[56] Heraclitus, I believe, is far from saying that humam life is completely determined by the inexorable laws of the cosmos. For how could he urge us to educate towards apprehension of the Common in order that we might be truly happy? But he faces the problem which all face who try to deduce a moral injunction from a purely descriptive situation. Indeed, we are told that a man's character is his destiny (fr.119). But how much of this is determined by ourselves in the overwhelming cosmic process?

of gods and heroes, ritual sacrifice and cathartic celebrations, etc., as means of happiness and spiritual salvation, constitute a gross misunderstanding of what god really is, and consequently, of what religion means. This world is a cosmos, a dynamic, orderly system, he seems to argue. And God simply is the eternal rational processes, the numerically measurable, vital and inviolable laws constituting the permanent, fundamental structure of the cosmos. This intelligible but vital foundation of the cosmos is called the *Logos*, which Heraclitus' spoken or written *logos* symbolises. The physical expression of this *Logos* is symbolised not only by the constant but measured mutations of the fire we observe in our hearths, but is also literally represented by the constant but measured mutations of the physical features of the cosmos which are actually features of a cosmic ever-living Fire. The *Logos* is not an originating power. But it is a supremely wise agent (*to sophon*) who steers (*kubernei*, fr. 41) and rules (*kratei*, fr. 114) everything, and is the veritable source of law, order, justice in the cosmos. In relation to the *Logos* our spiritual nature (*psuchai*) is both intimately connected all the time and yet separated (fr. 118).

It is implied that true religion, consists in coming to know oneself and to be wise (fr. 116). This means that we must follow that which is common and universal ((fr. 2), i.e., by inuring our *psuchē* to the common or universal laws of the cosmic *Logos* discernment of which will guide action to true happiness and true spiritual happiness (frr. 2, 33, 112, 114).

As our subsequent accounts will show, Heraclitus, among the Presocratics, offers us not only the first but also the most comprehensive philosophy of religion of which we have evidence, however fragmentary and gnomic. He is one more evidence to the

conclusion that the Presocratic systems are a series of rational theologies; arguments to the existence of a divine principle, as that which is ultimately presupposed in an explanation of the cosmos. He too adds to the philosophical specification of divine causality in terms of motion. For Heraclitus' God is, above all, the principle of *rational change* in the cosmos, which is its embodiment.

7 Pythagoras and some Pythagoreans[57]

During the last third of the 6th century and the following 5th, Pythagoras and (some of his) followers represented a movement of thought which combined attention to the nature of man with Milesian cosmological speculation. Religious concerns seem to have primarily inspired Pythagoreanism as a movement of thought in the 6th century, the chief concern centring around the right way of life.[58] This involves certain beliefs about the nature or meaning of life and/or the universe. Like all religious orders, the Pythagoreans must have developed a comprehensive set of credal answers to questions about life and existence.[59] The term

[57] The following is a speculative reconstruction of Pythagoreanism based on Philolaus and reports of Aristotle which I believe represents more than one version of Pythagorean philosophy. However, I shall assume some kind of unity based on certain thematic elements - such as a certain dualism, use of musical properties, and number. The qualification "some" is a contrast to "all", and is intended to allow for the possible genetic development of some Pythagorean ideas which do not directly concern religion; e.g., the pure mathematics of Achyetus and others. Whenever I say "Pythagoreans" I imply "some Pythagoreans".

[58] Pythagoras is said to have founded a religious order modeled on the mystical-cult society to which admission was gained by initiation - that is, by purification followed by the revelation of truth.

[59] It is implied in the report of Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorae* 82 (DK58c6), that the Pythagorean initiate was informed with a number of maxims called *acousmata* (things heard) or *sumbola* (passwords) which

philosophia - lover of wisdom - is reported to have been first used by Pythagoras.[60] It was perhaps in such way of life inspired by and devoted to philosophic wisdom rather than mere rituals of ceremonial abstinences and participation in sacraments which they regarded as religion pure and undefiled: making clean the heart within and preparing the spirit for a mystical or rather intellectual salvation and re-union with the godhead. The ideal of the mystic is to lose his individuality by total assimilation to god, and the stories about Pythagoras are about a mystic. According to Porphyry:[61]

What [Pythagoras] used to teach his associates no one can tell with certainty: for they observed no ordinary silence. His most universally celebrated opinions, however, were that the *psuchē* is immortal; then, that it migrates into other sorts of living creatures, and in addition, that everything which takes place at some time occurs again according to certain cycles; that there is nothing absolutely new,[62] and that all living things should be considered as belonging to the same family.

The idea of reincarnation was no novelty in the Greek world. But there are two legs to the Pythagorean doctrine of metempychosis: (1) transmigration as a process of expiating some original sin - a process which ends in the redeemed purity of the *psuchē*.

constitute a catechism of doctrines to be committed to memory as practical guide or knowledge. Perhaps possession of these ensured an initiate ready recognition both by fellow initiates and by the gods. 'All the so-called *acousmata* fall into 3 divisions: some of them signify what a thing is, some of them what is the most such and such, some of them what one must or must not do'.

60 See no. 40, chapter one.

61 *Vita Pytha.* 19 (= DK14A8a)

62 The doctrine of eternal recurrence is also ascribed to the Pythagoreans by Eudemus (see fr.88, Werhli = DK58 B34).

Possibly this recurs, in accordance with the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence;[63] (2a) possibly the combination of initiation and asceticism with (2b) *theōria* or intellectual contemplation of god as a means of purification. If (2b), of which the evidence is weak, is true, it is what is novel with Pythagoreanism.[64] The view of *psuchē* in (1) does supply catechisms about human destiny and also provides for a cult society practising monkish asceticism.[65] But if (2b) were true, purification would have taken an intellectual turn, consisting partly in the observance of ascetic rules of abstinence from certain kinds of food and dress, partly in the contemplation of the divine order of things. The orgy, ecstasy, and sacrament of the Bacchic or Dionysiac forms of purification do not appear as features of Pythagorean purification rituals.

Now at least three questions may be raised here about Pythagorean metempsychosis: (a) why do *psuchai* transmigrate? (b) why are *psuchai* immortal? (c) what is the constitutive nature of *psuchē*? There is not enough evidence to answer these questions or to answer them adequately. For (a), we can only assume the close association between some Orphic and Pythagorean themes, and speculate that *psuchai* transmigrate in expiation of some primal sin, although the nature of the sin, and the circumstances under which it is committed are not clear. For (b) we may turn to Alcmaeon of Croton whose affiliation with Pythagoreanism is disputed. He argues that *psuchē* is immortal, and hence similar to the divine on the grounds that it is

63 Cf. 5th century Orphic version of these ideas in the works of Pindar, *Olym.* II and frr.114,116, 127 - Bowra.

64 Controversy arises about what elements in (1) - (2a) belong originally to Pythagorean thought, and what to Orphism.

65 See Aristotle, frr. 195, and 197; Porphyry, *Vita Pytha.* 42 (DK 58c6).

intrinsically active:

> Alcmaeon supposes [the *psuchē*] to be a substance self-moved in eternal motion, and for that reason immortal and similar to the divine things (Aetius, A12); For all divine things are always moving continuously - moon, sun, stars, and the whole heavens (Aristotle, *de An.* 405a29-b1).[66]

Immortality implies, and is a condition of, divinity. Thus if the Pythagoreans believed that *psuchē* is immortal, they believed it to be divine. But by definition *psuchē* is alive. Therefore, *psuchē* is a divine principle of life. Consequently, if all living creatures are one family, this is presumably because all lives have a divine origin and, presumably, a divine destiny. However, such a concept of immortality by motion does not necessarily carry any belief in, or imply any, eschatology. Intrinsic mobility would seem to be required for *psuchē* to go the rounds of transmigration. In relation to (c) Aristotle ascribes a connection of air, breath or its power of movement to some Pythagoreans (*de An.* 404a17).[67] However that may be, the question arises: Is a transmigrating *psuchē* a *person* permanently surviving the rounds?[68] Apparently, the eschatological morality of transmigration requires

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66 Cf. DL viii, 83 = A1; Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* xi. 28, 9; Plato's *Phdr.* 245c-246a.

67 Cf. *de An.* 410b28: 'The doctrine in the poems called Orphic says that the *psuchē* enters (the body of animals) from the universe as they breathe in, and is carried by the winds'. The Pythagoreans debating the nature of the *psuchē* in the *Phaedo* - Cebes and Echecrates - seem to have in mind a view of the *psuchē* as liable to be dispersed into the air, like breath or wind (77d7-e2).

68 Cf. Jaeger (1947, p.83), who sees the *psuchē* of the Pythagoreans as bringing about the complete coalescence of the life-soul and consciousness as a presupposition of their doctrine of the so-called transmigration of souls

some notion of a person. But there is hardly any evidence in the Presocratics of a notion of *psuchē* as a person, i.e., as an agent with a set of unique experiences identical with some spatio-temporal existence. Generally, Presocratic thought supports the conception of some embodied power or force with conscious and cognitive, i.e., mental or psychic properties, the material embodiment being usually identified with that power - as with Anaximenes or Heraclitus' *psuchē*. However, the anecdotal evidence on Pythagoras suggests both that the *psuchē* carries an *experiential* memory,[69] and passes through all sorts of life - animal and vegetable.[70]

An old *acousma* reads; What are the Isles of the Blest? Answer: the Sun and the Moon. And Philolaus reportedly taught that the Moon, like the Earth, is inhabited, and that lunar creatures are fifteen times as powerful [as their terrestrial conterparts] Aetius A20]. So that (i) if countable persons survive the round of transmigrations, then, perhaps, they savour of the bliss in the Isles of the Blest; but (ii) if the *psuchē* is an impersonal *stuff* with cognitive and mental properties, it may disperse to join its like at death, and there can be no identity of particular personal *psuchai*. If the Platonic dialogues - the myths of *G.* 523a, *Phd.* 113d, *Rep.*, 614a and *Phdr.* 248c - can inform us about Pythagorean or Orphic view of *psuchē*, it is that it survives as a personality, acquires knowledge through "recollection", and undergoes judgement and a clearly ethical form of metempsychosis after death. Yet, 'the memory implied in the

69 DL, viii, 36 = B7; op.cit. viii, 4-5 =A8; Diodorus, x 6, 2

70 Cf. Xenophanes B7; Ion of Chios DK B4; Empedocles B129; Hdt. ii, 123 and iv, 93-95.

theory of *anamnēsis* may well be impersonal, the same for all men'.[71] On the other hand, Pythagoras, according to Heraclides Ponticus, Diodorus and Ovid,[72] did remember in the 6th century that he was the Euphorbus who was killed in the Trojan war of about 1084BC. However, the experiential linkage between Pythagoras and Euphorbos, between, i.e., the same human being who existed between a temporal gap is not logically impossible, allowing for the mysticism of the transmigration phenomenon itself, although the story does not tell us enough about the basic nature of *psuchē*.

There is the possibility that the nature of *psuchē* is a kind of *harmonia*. This possibility arises from the musical content of Pythagorean thought and from the Pythagoreans' encounter with Socrates in the *Phaedo*. Aristotle reports (*Pol*.1340b17) that: 'there seems to be some kinship to musical harmonies and rhythms [in the human *psuchē*; hence many wise men say that the *psuchē* is harmony or has harmony'.[73] The kinship between *psuchē* and musical harmonies and rhythms, if any, is not worked out, as far as the text of the fragments go. Simmias in the *Phaedo* (86C) exposes an apparent incongruity between harmony and immortality: 'If, then, the *psuchē* is really some kind of harmony, it is clear that when our bodies are unduly relaxed or tensed by disease or some other evil, the *psuchē* must

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[71] Cornford, 'Was the Ionian Philosophy Scientific?' in Allen and Furley, 1970, p.35. That in some form these ideas, and even more specific details have their origins in earlier doctrines of the surviving *psuchē* is beyond doubt and is confirmed in any case by Plato's own appeal in the *Phaedrus* and elsewhere to ancient authority, including "*hoi amphi Orphea*"

[72] Respectively, fr.89 W = DL viii.4-5 = A8; *Metamorphosis* xv.158-64.

[73] Also *de An.* 407b27-32 = A23. Cf. *de An.* 408a13-21 = A78

immediately perish'. Either the Pythagoreans were unaware of the *Phaedo* objection in relation to metempsychosis or the evidence of what they may have meant by *harmonia* or *psuchē* is too little to be intelligible. On the other hand, if, as it seems, *psuchē* is separable from body, the former's harmonic nature may possibly be unaffected by bodily disharmony or laxation. Although a difficult notion, the credibility of the relationship between harmony and the nature of soul is perhaps grounded in the musical basis of Pythagorean philosophy.[74] According to Cornford's projection of this basis:

> The scale is limited both externally - by the octave; for the scale ends, as we say, "on the same note" and begins again in endless recurrence - and internally...The introduction of this system marks out the whole unlimited field of sound, which ranges indefinitely in opposite directions (high and low). The infinite variety of quality in sound is reduced to order by the exact and simple law of ratio in quantity. The system so defined still contains the unlimited in the blank intervals between the notes; but the unlimited is no longer an orderless continuum; it is confined within an order, a cosmos , by the imposition of limit or measure.[75]

Three intervals formed the basis of the Greek musical system; the octave, the fourth, and the fifth. It was discovered that perceptible but recurring differences between sounds are a function of fixed numerical ratios. To produce notes an octave apart on vibrating strings adjusted to the same tension, one string must be precisely twice as long as the other. Only a 2:1 ratio will

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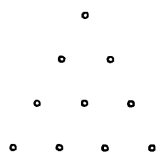
[74] If the properties of music were discovered by Pythagoras himself, *harmonia* may probably be an original key word in Pythagorean philosophy.

[75] Cornford, 'Science and Mysticism in the Pythagorean Tradition,' in Mourelatos, 1974, pp.143-144

produce notes octave apart. Similarly, a string will produce note a fifth above another only when their lengths stand in 3:2 ratio. And one note is a fourth above another when their lengths stand in a 4:3 ratio. Here is an invisible law of harmony or order that could be grasped numerically. However, the discovery and its generalisation led to some mystical interpretation or symbolism of number, and the whole set of powers of number was thought to exhaust in the number 10, *the Decad* or *Tetractys*, i e., the first four numbers - 1, 2, 3, 4 = 10, usually represented graphically as:



The number 10 was not only thought to be the "perfect" and the most potent oath of the Pythagorean Order, it was also called 'the font of ever-flowing nature', inasmuch as the whole universe is arranged according to attunement. And an attunement is a system of the three concords, the fourth, the fifth, and the octave.[76] If the Pythagoreans believed that the universe is a *kosmos*, as is generally the case among the Presocratics, it is possible they saw the *Decad*, not merely as containing the basic principles of music, but as having a deeper cosmic significance; that *harmonia*, which implies a relation of opposites reaches deep into the essence of things.[77] Thus the Pythagoreans may have

[76] Sextus, *adv. math.* vii, 94-5.

[77] According to Aristotle (*Meta.* 1090a20-22), every feature of life or existence had a numerical foundation: 'such and such an attribute of numbers is justice, such and such is *psuchē* and mind, another opportunity, and so on for everything else'. Alexander says that justice is

illustrated this by a table of 10 opposites.[78]

Limit	Unlimited
Odd	Even
One	Plurality
Right	Wrong
Male	Female
Rest	Motion
Straight	Crooked[79]
Light	Darkness
Good	Bad
Square	Oblong

Limit/Odd, Unlimited/Even appearing alongside Good and Bad, Right and wrong, Male and Female, reveal that as well as being descriptive, these cosmic principles are also *moral* and *social* features of the universe.[80]

In short, the *Decad* is projected as containing the fundamental principles of all things:

4, the first square number; marriage 5; opportunity 7 (*in Meta* 38.8-20). Comparable assertions are attested for Philolaus B5; B7; Pseudo-Iamblichus, A12

78 Aristotle *Meta.* 986a22ff.

79 The following explanation of the entries in the table are conjectural. But it is far more difficult to conjecture about the geometric entries - straight and crooked, square and oblong, except to say that the Pyhthagoreans were anxious to demonstrate the universal applicability of their doctrine of opposition. This may also be evidence of the Pythagorean reduction of sensibles or other phenomena through geometry to arithmetic. It is also evidence of the comprehensive indifference of Presocratic thought in which logic and ethics, physics and metaphysics derive from the same universal principle(s).

80 Cf. *Phil.* 25d, where Plato writes salutorily about "the mixed" (*to mikton*). When 'the equal and the double and whatever puts an end to the mutual disagreement of the opposites by introducing symmetry and concord, produce number'.

> One must study the activities and the essence of number in accordance with the power of existing in the *Decad*; for it is great, complete, all-achieving, and the origin of divine and human life...(Philolaus, B11).

An old *acousma* runs thus; 'What is the wisest? Answer: Number. The primacy of number in Pythagoreanism is more than adequately attested.[81] Number is not just the origin of divine and human life; it is the divine origin of all things, the physical universe providing its material embodiment:

> Number is the ruling and self-created bond which maintains the ever lasting stability of the contents of the universe (B23).[82] And the one is wholly the dwelling of reason (*to nōi*) and the other of becoming and change, and the one is *first in power* and *superior*, and the other is second and inferior. But that which is made of both, namely, the ever-circling divine, and the ever-changing mortal, is the universe. It is well that the universe should be an everlasting activity of god and becoming...(B21).[83]

The conception of god as a principle and a supreme causal power which is ultimately presupposed in an account of the cosmos, and whose causality is specified in terms of motion keeps forcing itself upon any one who deals with whatever little evidence remains of Presocratic thought. For the Pythagoreans, the fundamental principles of the cosmos are number, which are not abstract, static entities but vital and governing principles with the same dynamic potencies of a Heraclitean *Logos*. And there is even a report that

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81 See Aristotle's *Meta.*985b23, 986a15, 1080b16, 1083b8. Cf. Philolaus B4; Archytas B1; Iamblichus, *de communi mathematica scientia* 78, 8-18.

82 Iamblichus *in Nicom.* p.10, 22

83 Quoted by Stobaeus (*Ecl.* 1, 20, 2 p. 172, 9W) from a work attributed to Philolaus entitled, *On the psuchē.*

some 5th century Pythagoreans - Lysis and Opsimus, proclaimed that god is an irrational number (Athenagoras, A4).[84] Even if we grant that this and the quoted fragments above are spurious, still they are suggestively Pythagorean, as they appear to echo both the thesis of number-*archē* and the dualism fundamental to Pythagorean teaching and explanation. The quoted fragments above also show that the opposition of elements - here body and spirit - is harmonised at the higher level of the cosmos. B23 creates the impression that the "creative" principle of the universe is identical with the principle of its eternal stability, Number. These principal roles - creating and stabilising [all things] - may be said to combine in the Reason of B21, also called *psuchē* of the bodily universe. Whatever the value of the evidence, these fragments contain a thesis which coheres, in structure and content, with the previous theological theses we have been discussing, in which the first principle and cause of explanation is called god or the divine. Therefore qualms about admission of these fragments have peripheral, if any effect, on anything said in this section.

Given the Greek perception of the universe as orderly, the mathematical bent of the Pythagoreans was likely to suggest a whole new kind of *archē* to them. They might have represented the numerical ratios of things as their essences since, presumably, any material in the same ratio will yield the same thing. Thus the Pythagoreans might have talked of the world and its objects as constituted by ratios, or mathematical formulae which specify the

84 The Pythagoreans had recognised only natural numbers and fractions, thought of as ratios of natural numbers. The discovery of the irrational would shatter a Pythagorean cosmological thesis which is logically dependent on the commeasurability of the harmonic ratios.

structural properties that make something what it is. The report of Aristotle, that the Pythagoreans held that things are made of numbers or that things imitate numbers[85] would appear to follow from their enthusiastic understanding of the universe as quantitatively organised, the logical differentiation of structure and constitutive stuff being possibly (con-) fused in the process.[86]

The Pythagoreans, like their predecessors excepting Heraclitus and Xenophanes, have a cosmogony leading to a cosmology which, in Philolaus, shows an epistemological approach to metaphysics. Here too, the account of the cosmos concludes to the existence of a necessary first principle who satisfies the conditions of divinity:

> And indeed all things that are known have number; for it is not possible for anything to be thought of or known without this (fr.4). About nature and harmony this is the position. The being (*estō*) and very nature of things (*auta ha phusis*) which is eternal admits divine but not human knowledge,[87] except that nothing of the things that are and are known by us could be if there was not as a basis the being of those things from which the world-order has been composed - the Limiters and the Unlimiteds. And since these principles existed being neither alike nor of the same kind, *it would have been impossible for them to be ordered if harmonia had not supervened* - in

[85] Possibly Aristotle, if not quoting a Pythagorean source, may be representing the underlying idea when he says that 'the Pythagoreans say that being exist by imitation (*mimēsis*) of numbers' (*Meta.* 987b11), and that 'they seemed to observe many resemblances (*homoiomata*) in numbers to the things that are and come to be, rather than in fire and earth and water. Other things appeared to be assimilated to numbers in their entire nature' (*Meta.* 985b27-33).

[86] Cf. Aristotle's *Meta.* 1080b16 (DK58B9); 1083b8 (DK58B10). Also 1092b8 (Dk45,3)

[87] Cf. Alcmaeon fr. 1, DL V111, 83; 'Alcmaeon of Croton...spoke these words..."Concerning things unseen the gods see clearly, but so far as men may conjecture..."'

whatever manner this came about. Things that were alike and of the same kind need no *harmonia*, but those that were unlike and not of the same kind and of unequal order - it was necessary for such things to have been locked together by *harmonia*, if they had to be held together in an ordered universe (B6).

Notice the distinction between divine and human knowledge and their respective objects of cognition; (1) eternal being and nature of things and (2) Limiters and Unlimiteds. Presumably divine knowldge consists in a direct insight into (i), while human knowledge proceeds to (1) through analytical categories in (2). Now Eternal being is called the basis of the relation of the principles, Limiter and Unlimited, which are said to be *that from which* the world-order (*kosmos*) is composed. But Limiters are logically opposed to Unlimiteds. Philolaus then concludes that this cosmos would have been impossible had not *harmonia* supervened. Thus *harmonia* is invoked here as a dynamic eternal basis and nature of things, a third principle mediating Limiters and Unlimiteds, although Philolaus knows no more about its nature. 'Nature', we are told, 'was harmonised' (*harmochthē*).[88] It is also said elsewhere that 'everything comes about by necessity and harmony' (DL viii, 84). Probably, then, the Pythagorean position is that the world is intelligible because every existing thing has a specific expressible formula, a specific ratio. These ratios are species of *harmonia* in that they determine the infinite varieties of quality in things by measuring out (*limiting*) how much of the *unlimited* is necessary for definite objects.[89]

88 Barnes (1982, p.393)

89 'The point of the doctrine as a whole is surely to teach that the cosmos -

The epistemological basis of this metaphysics suggest that the principles - Limit, Unlimited, and *Harmonia*, are both cognitive, ontological, and analytical.[90] These principles are in essential relation, although Philolaus is at a loss to know in what manner they were cosmogonically related. According to Aristotle:

> They did not think that the Limited and Unlimited and the One are different natures - e.g., fire or earth or something else of that sort, but that the Unlimited itself and the One itself are the substance (*ousia*) of the things they are predicated of; for that reason number is the substance of everything (*Meta*. 986a15-17).

This implies that Limit, Unlimited, One, are principles of number. But although they are in this respect the same, they are not identical. They constitute different aspects, and play different, though not clearly stated, roles, in an account of the origin and nature of the universe. It is not clear, for instance, whether the One, which is itself numerical, is prior or subsequent to the elements of number.[91] There is also the possibility that the

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and everything that happens in it - exhibits a wholly intelligible order. The chief function of the Pythagorean identification of things with numbers is accordingly to give symbolic expression to that order. Particular numbers (chosen on a variety of grounds) are used to express the essence of particular things; and this makes it possible the order of all things by the member of each such number in an ordered series...' - KRS (1983), p.331-2. I think, however, that the Pythagoreans took number to be more than a symbol.

90 That there is epistemic and ontological fusion in the Pythagorean concept of number is further suggested by the other fragments of Philolaus.

91 According to Aristotle, the world began to take shape when the primaeval One breathed in some void from the Unlimited Air or *Pneuma* that separates and distinguishes the numbers (*Phy*. 213b22-27). But a citation from Philolaus suggests that the One is composed of Limit and Unlimited, like everything else in the world: "the first thing to be fitted

process of world-formation may well be the geometricisation of number (arithmetic) leading to stereometry.[92]

Philolaus offers a pyro-centric astronomy where the intervals of the musical scale explain the structure of the celestial sphere as based on the three ratios displayed in the *tetractys*. First, we have the unmeasured dark field of space called "the void" but filled with "air" or *pneuma*,[93] the breath of the animate world.[94] Fire is at the centre of the celestial system. Philolaus

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together (or harmonised), the One, in the middle of the cosmic sphere, is called *Hestia* or Hearth (B7). Another fragment speaks of number having two forms, odd and even, 'and a third from both mixed together, odd-and-even' (B5). Cf. '...The One *proceeds* from (*to d' hen eks amphoterōn*) both, for it is both even and odd, and number *proceeds* from the One, and the whole heaven, as has been said, are numbers' (*Meta.* 1.5.986a15). The evidence is, I suspect, confused. But Cornford (op.cit p.150) reads "consists of" for the first "proceeds from", and obtains a cosmogony with the One as the first principle. Cf. 'The universe is one, and it began to come into being at the middle, and from the middle upwards in the same direction as downwards' (B17) and 'The One is the beginning of everything' (B8).

92 In another passage Aristotle says that after the original One was constituted "whether from a *surface* or a seed, or from what they are at a loss to say, the nearest part of the Unlimited was drawn in and limited by the Limit' (*Met.* 1091a15)

93 Stobaeus, *Anthologium* 1, 18, 1c (quoting Aristotle; DK58B30). In the first book of his work *On the Philosophy of Pythagoras*, he writes that the universe is one, and that from the unlimited there are drawn into it time, breath and the void, which always distinguishes the places of each thing. Cf. Aristotle's *Phy.* 213b22 (DK58B30). The idea is obscure to me, though it appears to mean that existing things are marked out in time, and surrounded by void filled with air or *pneuma*. Cf. also the parallel biological thesis ascribed to Philolaus by Aristotle's pupil Meno: 'Immediately after birth the animal whose body is predominantly hot draws in the breath from outside, which is cold; and then sends it back as if paying a debt' (DK44A27).

94 That the cosmos is animate is typical Greek thought, and is a forceful demonstration of the continuity between mythological and philosophical cosmogonies.

calls this central position "the hearth of the world", "the House of Zeus", "mother of gods", "bond", or "*measure* of nature. Then again there is another fire enveloping the universe at the circumference. Around the centre ten divine bodies dance: first the sphere of the fixed stars, then, the five planets, next the sun, then the moon, then the earth, then the counter earth,[95] and finally the fire of the hearth which has its station around the centre' (Aetius ll 7, 7 (DK44A16).[96] The celestial bodies are disposed in relative distances varying in the ratios corresponding to the notes of the musical scale, so they constitute by themselves a celestial music. It is probable, therefore, that *Harmonia* is the divine principle of order in all things, and is basic nature to the specific dispositions of the elements of the *tetractys* in all things, lunar and sublunar.

So once more, we have here a rational theology. According to the Pythagoreans, any plausible account of the universe perceived as a cosmos will conclude to the existence of a divine *harmonia* of fundamental principles, which are numerical in nature; these constitute the intelligible and divine basis of our dynamic cosmos.

8 Parmenides

Parmenides' main thesis, the *Truth*, which occupies the first half of his poem, contains no direct connection of the first principle, Being (*esti, on*), with god or the divine. Consequently, Parmenides' system is perceived as falling outside mainstream Presocratic theological speculation. I shall argue an alternative

95 The counter-earth was invented by the Pythagoreans in order to square up the number of planetary bodies with the perfect and sacred number 10.

96 Cf. Aristotle *de Caelo* 293a18 (DK58B37).

position that there is a religious dimension or ground in Parmenides' system. Traditional religion had presented the divine dimension of reality by projecting causal powers that are both experienced and conceived as explanatory principles. Thales and his successors had reconstituted this naive religious intuition by a series of critical arguments which conclude to the existence of divine *archai* in terms of which the universe is intelligible and is capable of being explained. Parmenides, on the other hand, argues that there are formal criteria that an *archē* qua *archē* must satisfy. An *archē* can only be grasped *a priori* by reason alone; for sensation and sensibles cannot meet the formal criteria of Being. To demonstrate this, Parmenides in peculiar contrast to his predecessors adopts a completely different form of argument; he self-consciously isolates the most basic form of thought or speech - *esti* - and builds upon it an entire metaphysics, using hexametre verse, the traditional medium of divinely inspired truth. In the poem, "*esti*" is equivalent to "*on*" or "*to on*" (being), implying that the fundamental reality is a verbal noun.

Parmenides' metaphysics falls under two epistemological headings, Truth, and Opinion. "Truth", Parmenides implies in the proem to his versified message, derives from reason. Opinion, on the other hand, is meaninglesss or contradictory mortal babbling that arises from and depends on the senses (cf. fr.7,3-5):

> For never shall this be proved (*damei*), that things that are are not (*einai mē eonta*) but you must hold back your thought from this way of inquiry, nor let your habit, born of much experience force you down this way, by making you use an aimless eye or an ear or a tongue full of meaningless sound: judge by *reason* the strife-encompassed refutation spoken by me (fr.7).

The basic contrast here is between the Way of *reason* and the Way of *sense*. Against this epistemic basis of Truth and reality, the anonymous goddess who relates the message of Truth declares that Parmenides should learn both the "immovable" (*atremes*) heart of well-rounded (*eukukleos*) Truth as well as opinions of mortals in which there is no true reliance (fr. 1, 28-30). As it turns out, the meaning of 'immovable heart of truth' here means, I suggest, that the argument for Truth is unfalsifiable, i.e., is necessarily true. That the argument is "well-rounded" is because it is not only persuasive but also logically complete. By implication the proposition that expresses opinion will turn out to be not only untrustworthy but also invalid or contradictory and, for that reason, logically incomplete.

The account of Truth begins by proclaiming what it consists in, and what it is opposed to. These are offered as the only ways of inquiry that are to be thought of. The way of Truth is:

(1) That it *is*, and that it *is* impossible for it not to *be* (*hopōs estin te kai hōs ouk esti mē einai*). The opposed way is:

(2) That it *is not*, and that it necessarily *is not* (*hōs ouk estin te kai hōs chreōn esti mē einai*). This path is declared to be undiscernible; for *you could not know* (*gnoiēs*) that which is not (*to mē on*): that cannot be done; nor could you *indicate or say (phrasais)* it. Cf. fr. 8, 8

The italicised *esti, einai, to on,* express (1) the Way of Truth, while *ouk esti, me einai, to me on* express (2) the nameless and unthought Way. Both Ways are said to exhaust the ways of thought. But the further qualification of the second Way, viz., that

it is neither thinkable, knowable, nor sayable - is, I think, the key to understanding Parmenides. It implies that *esti, einai* and its participle equivalents, *on* or *to on*, are linked to sayability, knowability or thinkability. However, *esti* or *einai*, etc., is a carrier of state, time, quality or quantity, of a (grammatical) subject, and is not uttered or knowable *per se*. In the formula "... *esti*" the blank space is filled by a grammatical subject. Now if we translate *esti* and its participle equivalents as "to be" or "being", and for the sake of argument fill in "...*esti*", we get an instance of being, as for instance: *Theaetetus is sitting*. Then the Way of Truth - (1) above - is instantiated as; "Theaetetus *is sitting* and he *necessarily is sitting*" (i.e. since if he is sitting it is impossible for him not to be sitting). The second Way would be: "Theaetetus *is not* sitting and he *necesarily is not* sitting".[97] But this second Way already implies that Theaetetus *is* and *necessarily is* standing or lying or sleeping or squatting or.... In general, "x *is not* F" means "x *is* y or z or..."[98] Here, I believe, is what Parmenides means by saying that we can never say, think or know or indicate "what is not". This is further suggested by the following fragments:

> There is no other thing besides being (fr. 8,). For it shall never be proved that things that are are not (fr.7, 2). It must either *be* completely *or* not at all (fr.8)...it is *or* it is not. *But in fact*, it has been decided to leave the one way unthought and nameless; for it is no true way (fr.8). There remains only one account of a way, namely, *esti*

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97 The function of *to mē on, ouk esti* shows that the distinction between negative existential propositions, and negative subject-predicate propositions was not yet drawn.

98 Plato in the *Sophist* develops this insight of Parmenides.

In other words, *esti* is a self-assuring, underlying necessity, a logical force inherent in the very attempt to speak or think at all. To speak or think at all, is to speak or think that "x *is*...". Therefore, Parmenides concludes; being, thinking, saying, are one and the same:

> We necessarily speak and think Being; (*chrē to legein te noein to eon emmenai*) for it is to be, (*esti gar einai*) whereas nothing is not. (*mēden d' ouk estin*, fr.6). To think and to be is the same (fr.3)....you will not find thought without being in which it is expressed (fr.8.34ff).

Being, then, is for Parmenides, necessarily unnegatable. Therefore the formula of mortal opinion, "to be and not to be" is contradictory, hence invalid, and also a "backward-turning way" (*palintropos keleuthos*). After his proof of *esti* as the most basic axiom of expression, thought or knowledge, Parmenides proceeds to draw existential consequences from it and to demonstrate finally that Being is also the most basic principle of existence, so that *esti*, as a verbal noun, at once underlies and collapses all kinds of existences, states, qualities, quantities, time, into its logical necessity and unity, with the following consequences (fr.8): Being is thought (or absolute insight, *to noein*), one (*hen*), of a single genus (*monogenes*), undivided or undifferentiated (*oude daireton*), self-identical (*ta'uton menon*), whole (*oulon*), continuous (*suneches*), spherical (*eukulou sphairēs*), full (*empleon*), perfect or complete (*teleion*), not lacking in anything (*ouk epidues*), ungenerable (*agenēton*), imperishable (*anōlethron*), immutable or unmoving (*atremes, akinēton*), eternal.

These deductions express the sublimity of Being as an absolute beginning, existence or thought. The truth of this is guaranteed by Justice (*Dikē*), and strong Necessity (*kraterē Ankē*) - namely the force of reason or logic, 'which hold Being in the bonds of logical limits, preventing it from coming to be; while Fate (*moira*) fetters it to be whole and changeless'. All this implies that the absolute exclusion of "is not" (*mē on*) from the Way of Truth or reason involves the absolute exclusion of time and change from Being; for, by saying that *it* was we imply that *it* is not, and by saying that *it* will be, we imply that *it* is not yet.[99] However, the inescapable "it" will not give way, but is an eternal presence, and has a logical coherence and completeness from which it may be deduced that it is temporarily or qualitatively full, complete, whole, continuous, spherical, etc.

True, Parmenides does not expressly equate Being to god. Yet he alone among the Presocratics accumulates for characterisation of Being the total of attributes and conditions of divinity reserved

98 The first and most conspicuous difference between the Way of Truth and the Way of Opinion is that the Way of Opinion contains two forms (*morphas*) of which mortals ought not have named so much as one (fr. 8, 53-61). These *forms* are then materially filled up incongruously by mortals; for the one form is aitherial flame of fire, gentle and very light, in every direction identical with itself, but not with the other, although that other too is in itself the opposite; dark night, dense in apppearance and heavy. These opposite or contradictory forms and their qualities combine to produce the phenomena of the entire cosmos by the agency of an overruling goddess - Justice (*Dikē*) or Necessity (*Ankē*) - frr.10, 12; Aetius II. 7, 1. Parmenides calls this account of (mortal) Opinion (*doxa*) a 'deceitful ordering of words' (fr.8, 1. 50). The account of this second part of the poem grounds perceptual experiences and the imperfection or contradiction of the mortal formula - *to be and not to be* - in the two contradictory cosmic principles, in contrast to *reason* which knows, and is grounded in only one true form, *to be*. It is difficult to fathom all the relevant relations between the two parts of the poem. But cf. no. 101 infra.

for god both in popular religion and in the philosophical religion introduced by the Milesians. The identity of an entity may be legitimately inferred on the basis of its categorical specification: the presence of "god" may be reasonably inferred from the traditional set of conditions/attributes or from the set of predicates that are definatory of it. Before Parmenides - but all summed up in Xenophanes' concept of god - the notion of "eternity", "wholeness", "completeness" and "perfection", "not-lacking in anything" (or self-sufficiency), "oneness", "sphericality", "rationality" or "thinking", etc., have specified the condition and nature of divine reality. Thus Parmenides seems to have argued, from a purely existential axiom - *esti* - for the validity of these conditions of and attributions to Being, impliedly conceived as divine reality, graspable *a priori* by reason only.

The divinity of Being is also suggested by the proem to the poem. The main motif of the proem is the journey of the quest for Being under the guidance of an anonymous goddess, perhaps Justice (*Dikē*) or Fate (*Moira*), who reveals the "measures" or "sign-posts" of the route. To be sure, Parmenides uses the religious motifs as metaphors to convey a new truth about "reality in and of itself", or "the ultimate reality beyond the relativism of the common-sense world". However, the journey conveys a sense of the sublime, and suggests that Being is apprehended *a priori* by a kind of rational, divine intuition. Being itself is sublime.[100] But sublimity is, in Greek, a condition of divinity. Hence, being is divine. This conclusion is further intimated in the disciple of

[100] Since Being is sublime, Parmenides could not describe its nature in positive terms but only signified it in negative and positive attributive terms implying perfection, self-sufficiency, eternality and supremacy.

Eleatic philosophy, Melissus of Samos.

9 Melissus the Samian

According to Melissus (floruit c. mid-460 B.C):

> Nothing that has a beginning and an end is either everlasting or infinite (B4). But as it always is (*estin aei*), so must its *to megethos* always be infinite (*apeiron* (B3)...if a thing has room (*chōrei ti*) for or admits (*eisdechetai*) something, it is not full: if it neither has room for nor admits anything, it is full (B7, 9). It must necessarily be full...If therefore it is full it does not change (B7, 10). If therefore Being *is*, it must be One; and if it is One, it is bound not to have body (*asōmatos*). But if it had bulk, it would have parts, and would no longer *be* (B 9).

Melissus is seen by some scholars as absurdly drawing a physical conclusion (B3) from a temporal premise (B4). This physicalist reading, beginning with Aristotle, renders "*megethos*" "size". Although this is not impossible on the face of the fragments, a non-physicalist reading is not only possible, but also the more probable in my view, considering B9. For "*megethos*" is not only a word of quantity, it is also a word of quality: it does not only mean "size", it also means "greatness" (of power, might), "magnanimity" (*v*. Liddell and Scott). The main pillar of Eleatic metaphysics is the correlation of changelessness and timelessness. To change is to change in time. Being does not change. Hence, Being is timeless (eternal now, for Parmenides). Melissus, it seems, is talking about the infinite greatness (of power) of Being in relation to its timelessness (*aei on, esti*), and not, I suppose, in relation to infinite material extension (B4 & 3). For a materially infinite extension is radically incompatible with a bodiless

(*asōmatos*) Being (B9). Again, B9 defines "full" and "not-full" in terms of admissibility of something. But *dechomai* does not necessarily mean physical reception. It may mean "I approve". Here, I suspect, a logical sense of *chōrei* and *dechetai* is meant. Thus by "If therefore it [Being] is full, it does not change", all Melissus may mean is that Being's infinite greatness and eternity are a completeness that admits of no temporal gaps. Hence, insofar as change occurs in time, eternal Being is changless.

But Melissus also seems not only to correlate "time" with "finitude" and "change", but also "change" with "physicality".[101] Body entails not only change, but also temporal and physical parts. So that if anything is timeless, it is, for Melissus, infinite in greatness and changeless, and if changeless it is bodiless. In all the other fragments Melissus denies that Being has bulk and

101 'If things are many, they would have to be of the same kind as...the One. For *if* there is earth and water and air and fire and iron and gold, and that which is living and that which is dead, and black and white and all the things which men say are real; *if* these things exist, and we see and hear correctly, each thing must be of such a kind as it seemed to us to be in the first place, and it cannot change or become different, but each thing must always be what it is. But now we say we see and hear and understand correctly (B8, 2); and *it seems to us* that the hot becomes cold, and the cold hot, and the hard soft and the soft hard..so that it comes about that we neither see nor know existing things (B8, 3); and if it changed, Being would have been destroyed, and Not-Being would have come into being. Thus, therefore, if things are many, they must be such as the One is' (B8, 6). Those fragments tell us not that there are not many things or that there are many, but that the many in their ever-changing character, and hence unknowability, presuppose Being, since we *know* only that they *are*, not *how* or *what* they are. As Being lies beyond particular things, it fulfills them all without being identified with any of them. Nor is Being the mere sum of things. Rather it is their formal essence. Hence Being is One, and the logic of its very nature prevents it from ever changing or coming to be or perishing or...Only by being *asomatos* can it fulfil such a formal function (B9). On my reading, this conclusion is not different from Parmenides'.

parts, in other words, physical or mortal attributes: Being is not divided (B10); It does not change (B6) or come into being (Bl), and therefore has neither beginning nor end (B2). It is neither dense nor rare (B8); It does not alter, become larger, perish, recompose (B7, 2). It does not feel grief (B2 & 5) or pain (B2 & 4 & 5), but is healthy (B4 & 5). The psycho-physiology of B2, 4, 5 is not accidental, as it appears in more than one place. These fragments add up to a total picture of a Being whose perfection, greatness and completeness lie in an identity transcending physical and mortal limitations while embodying vital conditions that are ideal, e.g., that of being healthy. According to Aetius and Olympiodorus (A13) Melissus made the One (i.e., Being) God,[102] and frr. 2, 4, 5 would seem to support this.

Thus it is possible to conclude that, like their predecessors, Parmenides and Melissus think that any plausible account of the universe must presuppose an *archē* or *archai* - this is left open - whose divine sublimity and logical necessity engender a status which is distinctive of all the imperfections and limitations which accompany physicality and immortality, generation, destruction, having feelings of pain, etc.

10 Empedocles

Empedocles of Acragas (c.438-423 BC) is reported to have written at least two poems, *On Nature* and *Purifications*, which are deemed incompatible with each other; the first being a rational, philosophic thesis, the second, expressing an irrational, religious

102 Cf. The apparently contradictory view of DL ix .24 = Al); 'He used to say that one should say nothing about the gods, for there is no knowledge of them.' There is no contradiction here if "gods" mean gods of traditional religion, which are not the same as his.

mysticism. Therefore, he is by the estimation of some scholars a complex personality or worse than that; either he curiously combined philosophy with religious mysticism or, if the *Purifications* is the later of the two, that he retrogressed from the sobriety of a rational, scientific thinker to an irrational religious mystic. This assessment is unjustified. For the so-called Empedoclean science has been solidly erected on six metaphysical principles: Love (*Aphroditē/Cypris*), Strife (*Neikos*), Fire (*Zeus*), Air (*Hērē*), Earth (*Aidōneus*), Water (*Nēstis*). Empedocles calls the last four "roots" (*rhizōmata:* fr.6). But all are divine powers (*daemones*),[103] equal and co-eval. On the basis of their combined activity, he forges a concept of immortality and urges a new understanding of what people ordinarily mean by life and death:

> A wise man in such matters would not surmise in his mind that while they lived what they call life, so long do they exist, and good and ill befall them, but that before they were formed as mortals and once they are dissolved, *they do not exist at all.*[104]...of all mortals none has birth nor any end in accursed death but what is mingled (fr. 8). And when these are mixed in the form of man...or in the form of wild beasts or of plants or of birds, then, they say that this comes into being, but when they are separated, they call this wretched fate. They do not name them correctly as is right...(fr.9). Fools, for they have no far-reaching thoughts since they think that what before did not exist comes into being or that a thing dies when completely destroyed (fr.11).[105]

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103 Fr. 59, Simplicius, *de Caelo* 587, 20

104 Fr. 15, Plutarch's *adversus Colotem* 1113D.

105 There are Parmenidean echoes. In the latter part of fr. 8, Parmenides says that '*what is* has been named names which mortals have laid down believing them to be true - coming to be and perishing, being and not being, changing place and altering colour'. It seems that in both

(Although he thinks that the conventional understanding and use of "birth" and "death" is wrong, he will continue to use these terms as just a concession but not a commitment to convention, fr.9). It may be possible to read the above passages as a "scientific" reduction of metaphysical sentiments about life and death. But to succeed, one has to show that Empedocles' straight words are merely poetic. His straight words are that if we are wise we would not surmise that once the cosmic elements of which we are composed are dissolved *we* do not exist at all. Even if men are formed and dissolved by mechanical processes, yet the meaning of this passage is metaphysical; *we* do not exist just when we *are* mortals. *We* do not cease to exist at all when we die, i.e., when our constitutive elements are dissolved. It is implied, therefore, that *to live* is *to be* and *to be* is to be *immortal*. Hence, when in their productive function, the elements that *are* intermingled: 'Quickly, things turned mortal

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Parmenides and Empedocles mortal error arises in the same way; in the way in which the categories of "generation", "destruction", "birth" and "death" or "change" in general contain *ex nihilo* presuppositions - presuppositions which are logically indemonstrable. The metaphysical grounds of their thesis is clear. But whereas Parmenides talks of the impossibility of change of Being - which is the same as Thought, Empedocles talks about the immortality and divinity of life by reference to the cyclical changelessness of the interplay of the six divine principles of which, by the agency of Love, we are composed. Empedoclean princples are, in conception at least, Parmenidean beings: 'For it is impossible for anything to come to be from what is not, and it cannot be brought about or heard of that what is should be utterly destroyed' (fr. 12). Empedocles may have understood Parmenides as barring absolute coming to be and destruction. This is true since every coming-to-be and destruction presupposes Being. Hence, the relative unreality of time and change for Empedocles, who tries to accommodate Parmenidean Being and changing phenomena.

that used to be immortal before'.[106]

Empedocles, like Heraclitus, has a thesis of a grand cosmic life, insofar as his basic cosmic elements are living divinities. Empedocles' concept of "immortality" is cyclical birth, death, and rebirth:[107] '...insofar as they (sc. the roots) have learned to grow one from many, and again as the one grows apart grow many, thus far do they come into being and have no stable life (*aiōn*); but insofar as they never cease their continual interchange, thus far they exist always (*aein*) changeless (*akinētoi*) in the cycle' (*kata kuklon*, fr.17, 1-13). Empedocles' fervent urging of a new understanding of life and death, by suggesting, in the words of KRS (p. 292) that 'our real existence extends before "birth" and after "death" depends on a theory of a grand cosmic life. If that reading is plausible, then, it intimates the doctrine of metempsychosis prominent in the *Purifications* according to which mortal life - animal and vegetable, etc.- is a life *fallen*, by the agency of Strife, from blessed, long-lived gods. Mortals will return as gods after a predetermined time decreed by broad oath. The religious tone of these passages coming from *On Nature* is further bolstered by elements of traditional theology; the belief that all the gods are born from some divine first cause:

But as one *divine* element mingled further with another, these

106 Fr.35, Simplicius, *de Caelo*, 528, 30.

107 Frr. 17 and 35 also refer to elements learning to grow one and then many. At one time the cosmic cycle of birth and death as of the mingling and separation of the elements, seems to be controlled by the periodic alternation of the waxing and waning of Love and Strife, at another, to be predetermined by Oath (fr. 30; cf., B115) or Necessity. Cf. Aristotle, *Phy*..252a7-9 = A38; 'Empedocles would seem to say that the alternate domination and moving of Love and Strife belong to things from necessity'. See further Aetius A32, A45

things [sc. resulting creatures] fell together as each claimed to meet the other and many other besides these were constantly resulting (fr. 21). From them [sc. the divine elements] come all that was and is and will be in future - trees...and men, and women, beasts and birds and water-bred fish, and long-lived gods (*theous dolichaionas*) too, highest in honour (fr. 21. Cf. fr.23).

Just as in Hesiod, Zeus, born in a later generation, becomes the supreme authority in the community of gods, so too is Empedocles' supreme god born out of the four divine elements in the fullest integrity of Love, and to the total exclusion of despicable Strife.[108] The result is a supreme God, perfect as to shape and supreme as to mind:

As to the form of the cosmos, he describes what it is like when ordered by Love in the following manner; No twin branches spring from its back, it has no feet, no nimble knees, no fertile parts, but it was a sphere and it is equal to itself.[109] For, he is not furnished with a human head upon limbs...but he is mind alone (*phrēn monoun*), holy (*hierē*) and beyond description, darting through the whole cosmos with swift thoughts.[110] There, neither are the swift limbs of the sun distinguished - thus it is held fast in the close obscurity of *harmonia*, a rounded sphere rejoicing in its joyous solitude. But as Strife begins to win supremacy once more, one by one all the limbs of the God begin to quiver.[111] When great Strife had grown strong in the *limbs* (sc. of the God) and sprang to its prerogatives as the time was fulfilled which was marked for them in turn by a broad oath...[112]

Empedocles talks of *limbs* of the God, giving as an instance, the

108 Cf. frr. 29, 27, 31

109 Fr. 29, Hippolytus, *Ref.* vii, 29, 13

110 Fr. 134, Ammonius, *de Interretatione,* 249, 6 Busse

111 Frr. 27 and 31, Simplicius, *in Phy.*, 1183, 28

112 Fr. 30, Aristotle *Meta.* B4, 1000B12

sun, which is part of the constitutional features of a fully articulated cosmos. The anthropomorphic conception of god was radically revised by Xenophanes' powerful objections against tradition. Only mental powers and some ideal psychological states such as joy or happiness are retained.[113] The supreme God of Empedocles is modelled partly on the Xenophanean God, and partly on the Heraclitean. The three specifically connect supreme "reason" or "mind" with God. Like Xenophanes' both Gods are spherical in body. Like Heraclitus', God is a dynamic *harmonia* of different tendencies. Xenophanes' or Heraclitus' God is eternal, Empedocles' God is immortal in a cyclical sense. However, since "death" for Empedocles does not entail the existential negation but the mere "rebirth", "renewal" or "transformation" of life, Empedocles' God, like Heraclitus', can be said to be "ever-living". But unlike his philosophical predecessors, though like Hesiod and Homer, Empedocles' supreme God is generated from more basic divine powers.

Empedocles' Love and Strife[114] function as metaphysical grounds for psychic, moral, social and epistemic[115] phenomena. Love is the principle of friendship, harmony, joy, love, goodness, holiness, reason, and that by which we are conscious of love.[116]

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113 E.g., in Heraclitus, the drier the *psuchē*, the wiser and the happier. And a dry *psuchē* approximates to God, i.e., the fiery essence of all things which is said to be the Wise one. It is implied then that God is the happiest state of existence. Moreover, Xenophanes' God who is mind, governs the cosmos without toil. Likewise, Melissus' Being feels no pain but is healthy.

114 Love, like Strife, is most probably spatially extended, but so tenuous as to be invisible. Empedocles enjoins us to contemplate it with the mind and not with dazed eyes (fr.17).

115 Fr.109: For with earth do we see earth, with water water, with air bright air, with fire consuming fire; with Love do we see Love, Strife with dread Strife.

Empedocles calls Love *blameless* (fr.35), while Strife is *accursed* and *hateful* (fr.17). By calling Love blameworthy and Strife accursed, he registers not only *his* moral judgement, but also articulates the moral properties of Love and Strife. In fr. 115, a passage classified under *Purifications*, sin is explicitly associated with "trusting in raving Strife". Heraclitus had proclaimed the universal necessity of Strife as the principle of this world-order. For him such a principle is perfectly compatible with *harmonia*. For Empedocles, Strife is fundamentally incompatible with *harmonia* and Love.

Strife may indeed be a power of *separation* or *differentiation*, Love of *union* and *harmony* - powers in the exercise of which Love and Strife contribute to zoogony and cosmogony leading to cosmology (fr. 35).[117] But the four roots as active, divine, living powers, seem to share in the power of differentiation and unification:

Come now, hear how fire as it was separated raised up the

116 'for she [Love] it is who is thought innate (*emphutos*) even in mortal limbs; because of her they think friendly thoughts and accomplish harmonious deeds, calling her Joy by name and Aphrodite. She is perceived by no mortal as she circles among them' (fr. 14).

117 This fragment talks about 'countless mortals pouring forth'. It also talks of "things" (sc. elements) some of which are not yet mixed, some being mixed by Love. Since our present world contains large compact chunks of the elements, this fragment is possibly speaking in general terms on cosmology or cosmogony and zoogony. Other fragments relating to Love's "creativity" are B71, 73, 96, 98, 86, 87. According to Aetius, ii, 6, 3 (DK31 A49): 'Empedocles holds that aether was the first to be separated off, next fire, and after that earth. From earth, as it was excessively constricted by the force of the rotation, sprang water.' These first stages of cosmogony are most probably the effect of the vortex motion introduced by Strife. Cf. Fr. 38;. DK31A49; 31A30

nocturnal shoots of men and pitiable women...[118] Whole-natured shapes first sprang up from the earth, having a portion of both water and heat. These fire *sent up*, wishing to come to its like.(fr.62)

Fire *raised* and *sent* up whole-natured shapes in its up-going tendency, to join its like. Each of the other elements have their natural tendency too. And their co-existence - e.g., fire and water, naturally engenders certain meteorological events.[119] The matter is complicated: Love and Strife also appear as causes both of *sameness* and *difference* (fr. 22). The problem is, perhaps, artificial, remembering that the six Empedoclean principles are each an active, divine principle. Consequently, it appears that Love's principal business is not so much to motivate as to qualify, i.e., by *contributing* mutual desirability, beauty, harmony (or proportion), holiness and thought, to properties of the inherently active Roots. Empedocles' spherical God is grounded in a perfection of the harmonic relation of all things, in a state of unified concentration of all the divine powers, except Strife. Such union is occasioned by Love in its fullest presence. The result is a cosmos of the highest order of life - a God which is mind alone. Strife not merely differentiates principles capable of existing apart of themselves; it *disharmoniously* and *hatefully* differentiates. And this includes the active depreciation of the holy mental life of the spherical God. For Strife's power reaches

118 Aetius v, 181 (DK31A75): 'Empedocles says that when the race of men were produced from the earth, the day lasted as long as ten months does now, because of the slowness of the sun's motion. But as time went on, the day lasted as long as a seven month period now. For this reason ten-month babies develop in a single day...'

119 Aristotle, *GC*. B6, 334a1; Aetius ll. 6, 3; Ps-Plutarch *Strom. apud.* Eusebium, *P.E.* 1.8, 10 (DK31A30).

its acme when Love is fully present in the joyous solitude of an all-mind cosmic-God. *On Nature*, therefore, is not a purely scientific, materialistic treatise as is sometimes claimed; it also contains a theology and some religious notes.

The *Purifications*, on the other hand, develops Orphic religious themes understandable only by assuming the metaphysics and theology of *On Nature*. The *Purifications* expands on the moral and psychic role of Love and Strife by showing how the conflicts of human life, which arise from our *daemōn* (Empedoclean equivalence of *psuchē*) reflect our intrinsic participation in Love and Strife. So that with Love we are always tending to harmonious relation with other things and finally to union with god, while with Strife we are tending apart, first from god, and then, disharmoniously from other things. Let us begin with the period of absolute supremacy of divine Love:

> Among them was no war-god Ares worshipped nor the battle-cry nor was Zeus their king nor Kronos nor Poseidon, but Cypris [i.e.Aphroditē] was queen. Her they propitiated with holy images, with paintings of living creatures, with perfumes of varied fragrance and sacrifices of pure myrrh and sweet-scented frankincense, throwing to the ground libations of yellow honey. Their altar was not drenched by the unspeakable slaughters of bulls, but this was held among men the greatest defilement - to tear out the life from noble limbs and eat them (fr 128). All things were tame and gentle to men, both beasts and birds, and their friendship burned bright (fr. 130).

This "Hesiodic" golden age reflects a cosmic period in which Love is still very strong, and Strife is negligible. In *On Nature*, we were told in no uncertain terms that Love's nature is to be defined by its function: among others the production of harmony,

friendliness, and the perfect harmonisation of the *daemonic* elements into a single supreme deity whose indescribable holy mind darts through the whole cosmos. This "god-cosmos" or "cosmos-god" contains no iota of Strife, so that no distinction of god's "limbs" are visible. The limbs in question are the sun, water or sea, and other elemental features of our present cosmos. The same thought is religiously applied here with more or less coherence: first the *queenship* of Aphroditē in whose tenure *all things* are *tame* and *gentle* - both beasts and men, and their *friendship* burns bright. Secondly, the *holy* mind of the sphere-God is given a religious treatment; it is attended by sacramental purity, which needs no further elaboration except to stress absence of sacrificial defilement by bloodshed. To say that in the golden age, "no war-god Ares was worshipped nor was Zeus their king nor Kronos nor Poseidon, but Cypris was queen", implies a state of advanced supremacy of Love. And if, as is suggested by the text, there is indeed social life in the golden age, although one that is characterised by impeccable sanctity, then it is more probable that the golden age corresponds to a stage next to the absolute queenship of Love. This near-perfect harmony of all things to the almost absolute exclusion of Strife would be compatible with the existence of agents whose nature is encompassed by a (negligible) degree of Strife which is not sufficient to make the golden age impossible.

However that may be, let the time sealed by broad oath mature, and let Aphroditē begin to relinguish her supremacy by the incursion of Strife. Then the ratio of advancing Strife and retreating Love engenders an unpleasant state: the *harmonic*

binding of existing things and friendly feelings begin to wane; accursed and selfish individuality begin to return; unreason begins to resurface; piety is diminishing. The golden age of Love-dominating cosmos is being replaced by our Strife-encompassed cosmos. The process entails a hybrid of the powers of Love and Strife:

> There were far-seeing Sun, bloody Discord and serene *harmonia*, Beauty and Ugliness, Haste and Tarrying, Lovely Truth and blind Obscurity (fr.112).

Strife's advance tends to despicable proportions. Empedocles could not help crying (at birth, perhaps) at the sight of this

> unfamiliar place where Murder and Anger and the tribes of other Deaths... and the *daemones* wander in darkness over the meadow of Doom (fr.118). Alas, poor unhappy race of mortals, from what *strifes* and groanings were you born.[120] From what high rank and from what height of bliss...[121] we have come under this roof... clothing (sc. the *daemōn*) in an alien garment of flesh.[122]

Torn off by Strife from the felicity and tranquility of the holy all-mind God, man is a *daemōn fallen* directly from the divine bliss of the long-living or blessed gods (ffr. 21, 115) who, it seems, are intermediate in status between the supreme spherical-God and man; and man will go through a series of transmigrations until purified of his primal sin, he returns as god to the divine bliss:

> For I have already been once a boy and a girl, and a bush and a bird, and a leaping, journeying fish (fr.117)...I too am now one, an exile from the gods and a wanderer, having put my trust in

120 Fr. 124.

121 Fr.119.

122 Fr. 126.

raving Strife (fr.115). Among the beasts *they* [*daemones*] are born as lions with lairs in the hills and beds on the ground, as laurels among fair-tressed trees (fr.127). But at the end *they* come among men on earth as prophets, bards, doctors and princes; and thence *they* rise as gods highest in honour, sharing with the other immortals their hearth and their table, without part in human sorrows or weariness (frr.146, 147).

Empedocles himself has reached the threshold of becoming a god; for he sees himself as a prophet, a bard, a doctor, and now a prince, almost Love incarnate as his presence in every city *draws* a throng:

An immortal god, mortal no more, I go about honoured by all, as is fitting, crowned with ribbons and fresh garlands; and by all whom I come upon...I am revered...They follow me in their thousands asking where lies the road to profit, some desiring prophecies, while others ask to hear the word of healing for every kind of illness...(fr.112)

However, all life is sacred, since it originates from the *daemonic* divinity of the six principles. Here is the ground for moral and ritual injunctions against bloodshed and cannibalism, and for selected vegetarianism (fr.136,[123] fr.140,[124] fr.141). Cannibalism, anger, bloody discord, murder, blind obscurity, etc. are a function of Strife. Now Empedocles adds or rather explains "blind

123 'The father lifts up his own son changed in form and slaughters him with a prayer; blind fool, as he shrieks piteously, beseeching as he sacrifices. But he, deaf to his cries, slaughters him and makes ready in his halls an evil feast. In the same way, son seizes father, and children their mother, and tearing out the life they eat the flesh of those they love'.

124 It is not clear why, or rather it is inconsistent to insist on, abstinence from only some plants - if, as it appears, the sacred origin of life grounds the asceticism of a practical believer in transmigration.

obscurity"[125] as perjury, and suggests that indulgence in these bar *daemonic* redemption from the travails of transmigration. Bloodshed is a primal sin, and transmigration is a necessary process of expiation:

> An oracle of Necessity, ancient decree of the gods, eternal, sealed with broad oaths; when anyone sins and pollutes his own hands with bloodshed, who by his error makes false the oath he swore - spirits whose portion is a long life (*makraionos...bioio*)[126] - for thrice ten thousand years he wanders *apart* from the blessed, *being born throughout that time in all manner of forms of mortal things, exchanging one hard path for another.* The force of the aether pursues him into the sea, the sea spews him out onto the floor of the earth, the earth casts him into the rays of the blazing sun, and the sun into the eddies of the air; one takes him from the other, but all abhor him. Of these I too am now one, an exile from the gods and a wanderer, having put my trust in Strife (fr.115).

The *Purifications* is a quest for a desirable quality of life, and the manner of its attainment. The highest life is that of the spherical God. Next is the life of the blessed or long-lived gods (*daemones makares*, fr.115, *thous dolichaionas*(fr.21) - presumably born in an advanced supremacy of Love and having a good amount of Love and the corresponding rationality. Perhaps, living the life of a god happens during the Golden age - since this period seems to admit of social life. This is the point from which humans, first as long-living *daemones* are descended. By fr.115 we appear to be directly descended and alienated from them, i.e., born into shorter-lived, mortal forms of life by Strife in whose

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125 In fr.122 he had contrasted Lovely Truth with blind Obscurity. It seems that it means blind Falsehood.

126 The fragments of Empedocles contains only a single occurrence (B138) of *psuchē*, and then it means life.

trust we violated the eternal decree and thereby necessitated our alienation. At this time Ares (or Strife) was negligible and Love was very Strong. Next, the wretchedness of human life with the advancement of Strife, and the still lower forms of life - bestial, fish, bird, and vegetable, are concommitant to the life of an alienated *daemōn*. The *Purifications* then offers a programme for redeeming our origin as *daemones makares*. Empedocles seems to think that despite the fact that the alternating periodic supremacy of Strife and Love is governed by the rule of Necessity, it is possible willfully to specifically cultivate Love for the prospect of a *makarios* life. And, no doubt, part of our success will depend on how far we carry out Orphic precepts.

Fr. 115 suggests that the alienated *daemōn*[127] begins his thrice ten thousand years exile directly from element to element, trying to assimilate itself to each and failing each time; from the force of aether (or air) to the sea (water) to the earth to the sun's rays (fire), and back again to aether. The elemental round of the fallen *daemōn* repeats the succession in which in *On Nature* Strife articulates the elements, i.e., the limbs of the spherical-God.

But, what survives the round of transmigrations? We are told that the more harmoniously constituted, the more intelligent we are.[128] Since the sphere-God is a perfectly harmonious entity

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127 Empedocles both in *On Nature* and in *Purifications* seems to have rationally re-worked themes from Hesiod's works; the importance of Strife, *Aphroditē* (*Erōs*) and the idea of the Golden Age, for example. Cf. *Theogony* 775-806 which tells of the fate of any god who engages in quarrel and strife and then foreswears the oath to desist. And man is identified with the banished god

128 'Those in whom the elements are equally blended or nearly so...are the most intelligent and the most acute, in sensation, and those closest to them are appropriately (acute and intelligent), while those with the opposite composition are the most foolish...And those who have an equable blend

which is also all-mind, it follows that there are degrees in harmonious nature of which the long-lived gods come between us and the spherical-God. Though all life is, in the end, immortal, the life of the spherical-God is the highest and the best. Then that of the long-lived gods who are said to live free of human sorrows and weariness. They also have an unwearied, happy life, free of the miseries of anger, bloody discord, murder, and other "Strife-engendered" anxieties. Empedocles comes closest to tradition in his conception of the gods. But as we have already seen, he stops short of attributing human form to the spherical-God. We may reasonably infer that he likewise refrains from attributing human form to the long-lived gods. However, both the spherical-God and the lesser gods have kinds of personality: the spherical-God comes to exist in *joyous* solitude; and the long-lived gods are a happy, blessed lot, free of human sorrows, etc. What survives the round of incarnations is an agent but not necessarily of a human psychological form.

We might conclude with the note that for Empedocles too, as for his predecessors, the fundamental ground of all things are divine realities (constituted by the six basic *daemones*), which serve as that which are ultimately presupposed in an account of the universe; and the explanatory function of divine causality is expressed in terms of motion.

11 Anaxagoras

Anaxagoras of Clazomenae (c.500-428 BC). The famous jibes

in some one part are skillful with that part. Therefore some men are good orators, others craftsmen, because the (proper) blend in one case is in their hands, in the other case in their tongue; and the same is true of their capacities' (Theophrastus *de Sensu* 10-11 = Empedocles A86, 10-11).

which Plato's Socrates threw at Anaxagoras in the *Phaedo*,[129] and the subsequent use of *Nous* in the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus* explain why Plato,[130] with Aristotle in the *Metaphysics*, is unsparing even as he admires Anaxagoras. Anaxagoras had postulated or derived the existence of the highest possible order of reality, *Nous* (Reason or Mind), but, on Plato's reading, failed to express its function in teleological terms; Anaxagoras does not show that phenomena in the cosmos contribute in a rational and definite way to the good of a whole. He only shows that the universe is a rationally ordered system, a cosmos, because *Nous* is diffused in it:

> All things (*chrēmata*) were together, infinite in respect of both number and smallness; for the small too was infinite (fr.1)...while all things were together, there was not even any colour plain; for the mixture of all things prevented it...(fr.4) The things in the one cosmos (*en kosmōi*) are not separated one from the other nor cut off with an axe, neither the hot from the cold nor the cold from the hot (fr.8). And since these things are so, we must suppose that there are many things of all sorts in everything that is being aggregated, seeds of all sorts of shapes and colours and tastes (fr.4). How could hair come from what is not hair, or flesh from what is not flesh? (fr.10)...the first principles of things were the homoiomeres. For it seems...impossible that anything should come into being from the non-existent or to be dissolved into it. Anyhow we take in nourishment that is simple and homogeneous, such as bread or water, and by this are nourished by hair, veins, arteries, flesh, sinews, bones and all the other parts of the body...(Aetius 1, 3, 5 (DK59a46). In everything there is a portion (*moira*) of everything except Reason (*nou*); and there are some things in which there is Reason as well (fr.11). And when Reason initiated motion, from all that was moved Reason was separated, and as much as Reason moved was all divided off...(fr.13). But Reason, which ever is, is assuredly

[129] Especially *Phdo.* 98b =A47.

[130] Cf. *Meta.* 985a18-25 =A47. Also *PA* 687a7-12 = A102

even now where everything else is too, in the surrounding mass and in the things that have been either aggregated or separated (fr.14). And all the things that are mingled and separated and divided off Reason knew all (*panta egnō nous*). Reason arranged everything (*panta diekosmēse nous*), including the present rotation of the stars, the sun, moon...(fr. 12)

The main threads of the thesis may be said to hang on a few principles or assumptions and deductions. Let t_0 be a pre-cosmic moment, and t_1 any cosmic moment. Anaxagoras assumes that:

(a) Although the things in *this* universe - things i.e., hot, dry, cold, wet, colour, shape, etc.[131] - are perceptually differentiated, they are not actually separate one from the other (fr. 4, 8).

(b) Hair cannot come from what is not hair or flesh from what is not flesh (fr. 10).

(c) *This* universe is a cosmos, i.e, a dynamic, orderly system.

From these assumptions (and presumably with some others), Anaxagoras infers: from (a) that (1) at t_0, all existing things at t_1 were together; from (a) and (b) that (2) there must be infinite seed-*archai* (*spermata, moira*) - i.e., self-sufficient sources of (hot, dry, flesh, colour, hair etc.- i.e.) everything inter-containing one another, some containing reason; (2) implies that (3) there is no absolute coming to be and destruction, and that generation and destruction occur by aggregation and separation. The crucial assumption is (c) which suggests that existing things are seggregated or mixed in an orderly system. Indeed, to say that every existing thing has a seed (*sperma*) as its source is to suggest some kind of dynamic, self-sufficient source for the existence of each thing. However, such a source is not in itself

131 Anaxagoras, like his predecessors, does not distinguish between a "thing" and a "quality". See fr.12.

sufficient enough to account for the existence of this universe as a cosmos. Anaxagoras may have reasoned that for sufficiency of account, there must be another factor - Reason - whose function, adequately specified, will be jointly sufficient with the presence of the infinite seed-*archai* to account for this universe perceived as a cosmos.[132] Although he does not call Reason god, Anaxagoras' specification of Reason's function leaves no doubt that he has in mind the sort of *archē* recognisable in the context of preceding thought and in traditional religion as divine.

That Anaxagoras' thesis is theological is obvious from the following reconstruction: at t_0 all existing things at t_1 were together, apart from Reason, and at t_1 some, but not all things, contain parts of Reason. Reason who *knew*[133] this cosmos at t_0, *moved* and *arranged* (i.e., seggregated and mingled) existing things into a cosmos at t_1. The further specification of the nature of Reason in fr. 12 suggests that Reason is a divine *archē*; "Reason has power [or rules] over all things" (*pantōn nous kratei*). But having causal power grounds the Greek idea of god. Further, the divinity of divine power is grounded in conditions of (1) eternality, (2) supremacy, (3) ideality/perfection. (i) is satisfied by the relative clause in fr. 14: Reason, "which *ever is*" (*hos aei esti*). (2) is satisfied by the scope of Reason's power or rule (*pantōn nous kratei*). The satisfaction of (3) is suggested by the qualitative nature of Reason: it is "the *finest* and the *purest*" of

132 'All Reason is alike, both the greater and the smaller. But nothing else is like anything else; on the contrary, each individual thing is and was manifestly those things of which it contains most' (B12).

133 According to Simplicius = A45, 'Reason wanted (*boulētheis*) to make a world; He seemed to say that all things were together and at rest for an unlimited time, and that the cosmogonical Reason, wanting to separate out the kinds which he calls homoiomeries, created motion in them'.

all things. The radical opposition of Reason and Matter which we find in Plato and Aristotle is not yet made in Anaxagoras. There is no suggestion that the infinite other principles are inert. For Anaxagorean realities are seeds (*spermata*, *moira*) - which are bio-chemically dynamic structures.[134] Yet the power of Reason, which is causally conceived, functions primarily in movement and cognition, and then in arrangement - the sort of activities which seeds are incapable of performing.[135]

Other clues to the divinity of Anaxagoras' Reason are the scope of its knowledge, its consciousness, and the satisfaction of (4) - self-sufficiency. Anaxagoras thinks that Reason's power is fullest when unencumbered. He therefore grounds Reason's supreme power in four conditions: (a) self-rule; (b) unmixed purity;[136] (c) control of everything; and (d) infinity. (a) and (d) satisfy condition (4); (a), (c) and (d) also satisfy (2), while (a) and (b)

134 Cf. Simplicius, *in Phy.* 27, 11 (DK59A41),'Theophratus says that the theory of Anaxagoras resembles that of Anaximander; for Anaxagoras says that, in dividing up of the infinite, things of like kind *tend* together, and what was gold or earth in the original whole becomes gold or earth respectively'. Also DL ll, 8 (DK59A41)

135 According tc Simplicius, *in Phy.* 27, 2, Anaxagoras 'shared the philosophical beliefs of Anaximenes'. So that he is taken to have taught, with his student Achelaus, that *psuchē* is made of air. Aristotle says that 'Anaxagoras says that *psuchē* is the moving principle' (*de An.* 404a25). It is not clear to me whether the Peripatetics read Achelaus into Anaxagoras; that is, whether Anaxagoras thought that Air or Aether could serve the unmixed purity of Reason.

136 Anaxagoras' pupil, the Athenian Archelaus, wrote in protestation against the unmixed purity of Reason: 'he maintained that from the outset there was a certain mixture immanent in Reason...Reason is inborn in all animals alike; for each of the animals as well as man makes use of Reason, though some more rapidly than others' (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 1,9.1). According to Aetius, '[He held that reason and Air are god, but not the cosmogonical reason]' (A12)

satisfy (3). (c) is said to depend on (b). And (b) is explained as "all alike, both the greater and the smaller quantities". Since Reason knows, controls, arranges, "he" is, at least, alive and conscious. Consequently, if also Reason is everywhere, the entire cosmos is animated by Reason's ubiquity. Item (b) - unmixed purity - enables Anaxagoras to account for the limited presence of Reason as an internal constituent of (some) living things. Item (c) - control of everything - includes (i) the control of all living things, (ii) arrangement of all things by motion - separation, aggregation and rotation at "t_1". (ii) includes the present and future comings-to-be and perishings, and the present rotation and arrangement of the stellar and solar systems.

"Reason, which *ever is*, has knowledge about everything." Anaxagoras also says not only that Reason knows all that are mingled and separated and divided, but also that every arrangement, and the motion by which the arrangements are made, now and in the future, is predetermined by Reason. It is suggested then that Reason has timeless knowledge, and with it planned the blueprint for cosmogony and determined how the primordial mass should be articulated into a cosmos, now or in the future, just as in the past.

Once again, here is evidence that what is deemed an adequate account of the universe perceived as a cosmos terminates in the existence of a divine cause and principle of (rational) motion, as that which is ultimately presupposed in that account. This conclusion is even more conspicuous in Diogenes of Apollonia.

11 Diogenes of Apollonia

Diogenes (floruit c. 440-430) is, next to none, the *locus classicus*

for the argument that Presocratic philosophy is also rational theology. His main thesis is Anaximenean with some sophistication deriving from his ecclectic hindsight. His own words are indispensable:

> My opinion, in sum, is that all existing things are differentiated from the same thing, and are the same thing...for if the things that are present in this cosmos (*en...kosmōi*) - earth, water, air, fire and all the other things apparent in this world-order - if any of these were different from the other (different, i.e., in its own proper nature (*heteron on tēi idiai phusei*), and did not retain an essential identity (*mē to auto eon...*) while undergoing many changes and differentiations, it would be in no way possible for them to mix with each other, or for one of them to help or harm the other, or for a growing plant to grow out of earth or for a living creature or anything else to come into being, unless they were so composed as to be the same thing. But all these things, being differentiated from the same thing, become different kinds at different times and return to the same thing (fr.2). For...it would be impossible without reason for it (sc. the underlying substance) so to be divided up that it has *measures* of all things - of winter and summer, and night and day, and rains and winds and fair weather. The other things, too, if one wishes to consider them, one would find disposed in the best possible way (fr. 3)... For this very thing seems to me to be a god, and to have reached everywhere, and to dispose all things and to be in everything...(fr.5).

Diogenes assumes that the universe is a *cosmos arranged in the best possible way*. On this assumption, the following laws or inferences must hold: (i) The apparently different things in the cosmos must be related to or must interact with one other; (ii) - (i) is possible if and only if the apparently different things in the cosmos have a [common] proper nature, i.e., if they are *essentially* one and the same thing; (iii) If (i) and (ii) are to hold, Air must be the *archē* of all things in the cosmos (fr. 5); (iv) It

follows from (i)-(iii) that the apparently different things in the cosmos are *essentially* Air;[137] To satisfy the conditions of an *archē* of a cosmos *arranged in the best possible way*, Air must (a) reach everywhere, (b) arrange all things, (c) be in everything and, above all, (d) be intelligent (fr.5; cf. fr. 8). (a)-(c) are satisfied for Diogenes because Air is conceived as infinite in power, in differential qualities, and in quantity (see fr.5); it is "many-fashioned", *polutropoi*, and displays its infinite qualities through rarefaction and condensation.[138] By those processes of change *psuchē* is produced of warm air of varying temperature for varying kinds of living creatures (fr.5). All these manifold changes are engendered by the internal dynamic character of Air. [Air] is also said to be eternal, and immortal body (fr.7), great, strong, and much-knowing (fr.8), while of the rest some come into being, some pass away (fr.7). "Much-knowing" is supportive of the express attribution of intelligence to Air; it satisfies the condition of intelligence required of an *archē* of a cosmos arranged in the best possible way. Such is what god is. Hence, the inferential, 'For this very thing seems to me to be a god' (fr. 5). Notice the self-consciousness with which it is suggested that the properties of the air-*archē* satisfy the conception of god. Diogenes, like his progenitor Anaximenes, may have confirmed (or

137 'The others say that perceptible things are by nature (*phusei*); but Leucippus and Democritus and Diogenes say that they are by convention (*nomoi*), i.e., in opinion (*doxei*) and in our affections (*pathesi*, A23)

138 Simplicius = A5: 'He says that the nature of the whole is Air, unlimited and eternal; and from it, as it is condensed and rarefied and changed in its affections, the form of the other things comes into being'. Or, Ps-Plutarch, A6; 'He makes the cosmos thus: as the whole is moved, and becomes rare here and dense there...'

established) the vital, divine ground of the cosmos and its rational function by an analogical argument:

> Further, in addition to those, these too are important indications. Men and other living creatures live by means of air through breathing it. And this is for them both *psuchē* and reason, and if this is removed, then they die and reason fails (fr.4). And it seems to me that that which has reason is what men call air, and that all men are *steered* (*kubernasthai*) by this, and that *it has power* (or rules, *kratein*) over all things (fr.5).

Note the "steering" function and supreme or ruling power of the divine ground of all things. The first sentence suggests that Diogenes was trying to confirm rather than find grounds on which to infer the living divinity and intelligence of Air, but the other way might be true.

Thus Diogenes also thinks that the existence of god or a divine power is necessary as the ultimate presupposition in an account of the universe as a cosmos. Such a power is deemed sufficient to account for the existence of our teleologically conceived cosmos by its inherent power of motion expressed in terms of rarefaction and condensation.

13 The atomists

Against the common tendency to read the atomic system of Democritus and Leucippus as a non-religious, material philosophy of science, I shall, in what follows, argue that the Atomists share with the Presocratics the general pattern of thought by which god or divine reality is associated with the *archē* of all things; that some god-producing *archē*-atom provides an atomistic theology. There are, to be sure, different strands in the account of the gods.

But these different strands are not necessarily incompatible. However, their coherence, if any, is not a smooth one, as Cicero observes. After reporting that Democritus says that Reason is god, and is in the spherical atoms (*de Nat. Deor.* 1, 12, 29), Cicero continues:

> What of Democritus who now counts as gods images which travel about, and now that nature which pours forth and sends out these images, and now our own thought and mind; is he not vastly mistaken? Does he not altogether destroy god, when he denies that any compound is imperishable, since it never abides in the same condition, so that he makes any notion of god impossible? For at one moment Democritus says that images endowed with divinity are present in the universe, and then that the first beginnings of Reason, which are also in the universe are gods, and then images endowed with *psuchē*, which are wont to benefit us or do us harm, and then some images so huge that they embrace the whole universe from without...(43, 120)

Some preliminary remarks about atoms (*atomos* in Greek) is relevant here. "*Atomos*" means, first and foremost, that which cannot be cut into parts, the indivisible. Democritus is said to have referred to his atoms by the word "*phusis*" (B168). Aristotle, regularly uses the words "*to plēres*" (full) and "*to stereon*" (solid) to designate the atoms (cf. especially *Meta.*,985b4-22 = A6). In his monograph on Democritus, Aristotle says that Democritus calls each of these atoms "being" (*on*), "thing", "massy". Aristotle opposes atomism (*Meta* 1) because, to him, it recognises only a material cause. We must object that although some materiality may be involved in the conception of atoms, Aristotle's reading of the atoms as a material cause, implying the exclusion of Aristotle's three other causes -

formal, efficient, and final cause - is, in all probability, another example of his "interested" reading of his predecessors. Indeed, Democritean atoms do move, but they are in every other respect poles apart from Aristotelian matter - i.e., the materials of a thing as opposed to the structure that holds them together. And, although the system of Leucippus and Democritus has had the deepest impact on modern science; for the postulation of atoms surely contains a high degree of scientific rationality, their atoms are no chemical or electrically charged elements. And there is no evidence of any empirical methodology on which atomism was grounded. Already in antiquity it differed from Epicurus', and the latter's from Gassendi's.

Apart, probably, from intrinsic mobility, the atoms were conceived as indivisible geometric shapes (*schēma*) or forms (*rhusmos*) of infinite variety: 'There belong to them every kind of shape and every kind of form...some are scalene, some hooked, some hollow, some convex, and they have innumerable other differences'.[139] As geometric forms, individual atoms have no qualities as such. They produce qualities by their infinite shapes being in contact with one another and being arranged in infinite possible ways.[140] Thus all qualitative differences in objects are

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139 See Aristotle's *Meta.*, 985b16 = A6. Cf. Cicero, A11.

140 Simplicius (A8) says [Leucippus] hypothesised unlimitedly many eternally moving elements - the atoms - and the unlimited quantity of the shapes among them because nothing is rather such and such...'By convention sweet, by convention bitter, by convention hot, by convention cold, by convention colour, but in reality atoms and void' (fr. 9, Sextus *Adv Math.* vii, 135). There is a controversial Peripatetic attribution of weight to the atoms (See Aristotle's *GC* 326a9 = A60; Simplicius A61; Theophrastus, *de Sensu*, 61 = A135) - against Aetius' explicit denial (A47). The controversy subsists as long as we subscribe to the Peripatetic attribution of mass to atoms and follow them by taking atoms to be just material bodies. But the atomists could, presumably, do

the result of quantitative and organisational differences alone: coming to be and destruction are just conglomeration and dissolution of atoms. This is made possible because of the existence of void or space, which the atomists called, "non-being" (cf. Aristotle's *Meta.* 985b4-10). It is not clear, though, what "non-being" means - whether, i.e., it is empty space or a permeable atmosphere.

However that may be, the conception of *atomos* appears to answer the question all other Presocratics may have asked themselves and tried to answer: What is the fundamental ground and nature of all things? The orientation of this question is metaphysical., and the ontological order which the postulation of atoms is supposed to fill, legitimately inspires attribution of divinity to atoms, and is adequate to the consideration of some atomic nature as productive of gods or *psuchē*.

According to Aristotle:

> There are some who maintain that the *psuchē* is preeminently and primarily the cause of movement...Hence Democritus says that *psuchē* is a sort of fire or heat. For the shapes and indivisibles are infinite; and he calls those which are spherical fire and *psuchē*...Because such shapes can most easily penetrate everything, and being themselves in motion, can most easily move all others...(*de an.* 404aff). Democritus says that of all the shapes, the spherical is the most mobile; and this is the shape for both fire and mind (ibid. 405a11).

Although all atoms may be intrinsically mobile, some atomic shape is pre-eminently so. This shape is the source not only of fire or heat but also of life and mind, and of the power of penetration everywhere. It is most easily able to move

away with weight for individual atoms.

everything else and impart motion to all living things. This spherical atom is distinguished from other atomic shapes which are the source of bodily constitution. A commentary of Philoponus' on Aristotle's *de Anima* (83, 27) says: "Democritus says that fire was incorporeal, not absolutely incorporeal - for none of them said this - because of its subtlety. And Aetius (68 = A74) reports that according to Democritus god is reason (*nous*) in the fire atom. Cicero too (= A74) adds that Democritus thinks that our knowledge and intelligence or the principle of reason are divine. According to Aetius thought and perception arise when the *psuchē* or reason -atom is set in motion by the impact of congruent atoms[141] (A164).

Accordingly, I take it that there is an atomistic theology, and that this is founded on three limbs of the atomic hypothesis: (i) spherical atoms are god-, mind-, and life- producing atoms; (ii) gods are products of the sort(s) of atoms in (i); (iii) because the god-producing atoms are pre-eminently mobile and have the the property which enable them to penetrate everywhere, these atoms may be said to move all others. (i), (ii) and (iii) put the Atomists firmly in the mainstream of Presocratic theological thinking which postulates, or derives from the cosmos, some divine *archē* of motion as the fundamental ground of phenomenal existence. Here, a supreme kind of mobility attributed to the spherical atom establishes a status for it which is causally superior to all other atoms. Given (i) and (ii), we may as well believe the story according to which, for Democritus,

certain *eidōla* approach men, and that of these some are

[141] Aetius iv, 8, 10. Cf. Alexander, *de Sensu* 56, 12.

beneficient and some maleficient.[142] That is why he even prayed to attain felicitous *eidōla*. These are great and indeed enormous, and hard to destroy, though not indestructible, and they signify the future to men, being seen and uttering sounds. Hence the ancients, getting a presentation of these very things, supposed that there was a god, there being no other gods apart from these having an indestructible nature.[143]

The idea of "aerial" divinities is not peculiar here. It also appears in the theogony of the *Epinomis* which the author supposes to be a sequel to Plato's *Laws*. Cicero complains not about an atheistic Democritus, but about the coherence of the many strands in his account and conception of god. Democritus nods over the nature of gods, treating the *eidōla* sometimes as (a) being themselves divine, sometimes as (b) images produced by the gods. Clement, in accepting (b), says that *eidōla* fall on men and brute animals from the divine substance (A79). On this view, the term *eidōla* is taken in the psychological sense of *deikela* or *aporrhoiai*, i.e., films or effluences. Hemippus, the 3rd century BC biographer, taking (a), says in turn that Democritus "naming them [sc. *daemones*] *eidōla* says that the air is full of these" (A78). It is probably with reference to (a) that the following controversial passage was written:

Of the sage men, a few raising their hands to what we Greeks

142 It is perhaps in evident allusion to this passage that Pliny asserts that Democritus admitted only two gods, Penalty and Benefit (A76).

143 According to the last sentence, Democritus (a) may be denying the existence of gods behind the *eidōla* or (b) may be affirming *eidōla* as the only gods there are or (c), both (a) and (b). But possibly (d): since the ancients did not have an atomistic knowledge of the gods they took the *eidōla* as the only gods there were, unaware that on an atomist view, those *eidōla* are mere, filmy representations of real gods. Neither (a), (b), (c) or (d) denies the existence of gods. And this is all I need.

now call air, said: 'Zeus is everything; and he knows everything, and gives and takes away; and he is king of everything (B30).

Some scholars take it as equivalent to Critias' lawgiver (see below) who invents god as a sacred sanction to bolster obedience to public laws. Others see it as an ironical reference to the sage of old. And still others see in it a genuine acknowlegement of the intuitive wisdom of the sage. We read in Alexander Polyhistor[144] that

> the whole air is full of *psuchai* who are worshipped as the *daemones* and heroes, and it is these who send mankind dreams and omens.[145]

(a) and (b) above can be grounded on the atomist theory, (b) on the general atomistic theory of perception[146] which makes *deikela* (or *eidōla*) effluences similar in kind to objects from which they flow.[147] The second difficulty Cicero finds with the Democritean conception of god is that it is inconsistent with the belief that the gods are immortal, and is destructive of them: if

144 Alexander Polyhistor *apud* DL viii, 32 (=DK 58Bla). Cf. Posidonius *apud* Cicero, de *Divinatione.*, 1.64.

145 Cf. E.R. Dodds. op.cit. p.118 , who takes the atomistic account of the *eidola* to be a mechanistic basis for objectivised dream experiences.

146 'He has seeing occur by reflection...for the reflection does not occur immediately in the pupil, but the air between sight and the object of sight is given an impression as it is compressed by the object seen and the seer; for from everything there is always some effluence issuing. Then this [air] being solid and differentiated in colour [from the eyes], is reflected in the moist eyes; and the thick part [of the eye] does not receive it, but the moist part lets it through' (Theophrastus, *de Sensu*, 50 = 135).

147 Tertullian (A74) has Democritus generate gods with the rising of the heavenly fire.

eidōla, the filmy [divine] images are, on the atomic theory, effluences of the god-producing atoms organised in a certain way, Gods, then, would be compounds. But if compounds they are ultimately dissoluble into their atomic constituents. This amounts to destroying the immortality and imperishability of gods. This is the case whether or not (a) or (b) is to be preferred. But Cicero is not fully justified. The Greeks, we have noted, were used to the idea of a god who dies cyclically. The immortality of Persephone and Dionysus consists in a cyclical birth and death. Much more, whether (a) or (b), Democritus has provided for the persistent existence of gods and/or *eidōla* by the [eternal][148] presence of the god-producing atoms. The characterisation of god as great, of enormous size, hard to destroy though not imperishable, portent-agents, is an adaptation of traditional religion.

Whatever the true view of Democritus about gods, it is not easy to explain away what is obviously religious and metaphysical dimensions of the conception of atoms, especially in view of the preceding patterns of thought in which physics is grounded in metaphysics, while the latter confirms religion and culminates in theology. Democritus' positive asseverations in ethics, increase the difficulty for those who are inclined to rationalize his apparently religious language:

> It is best for a man to live his life with most cheer and the least grieving; and that will happen if he takes his pleasures not in mortal things (B189). For good spirits come to men through temperate enjoyment and life commensurate. Deficiencies and excesses tend to turn into their opposites and to make large motions in the *psuchē*. And such *psuchai* as are in large-scale motion are neither in good balance nor in good spirits (fr. 191).

148 No such word as "eternal" appears to have been used by Democritus. But we can assure ourselves for once that atoms as *archai* are eternal.

> They alone are dear to the gods to whom injustice is hateful (B217). He who choses the goods of the *psuchē* chooses the more divine; he who chooses those of the body, the human (B37). The gods grant men all good things, both in the past and now. But what is bad and harmful and useless, that neither in the past nor now do the gods donate to men...(B175).

According to these fragments, Democritus' concern for the spiritual care of the *psuchē* or of the inner self, almost matches Socrates' in zest.

There is also the purely psychological explanation of religious consciousness which is not easy to reconcile with the previous accounts that seemed to depend on the atomistic theory. It is that religious consciousness is inspired by the primitive terror caused by elemental forces like thundering, lightning, eclipses, etc.[149] However, we do not know in what contexts these thoughts were expressed, and it may well be that they entail no inconsistency with the previous accounts. Democritus may be explaining why some phenomenal aspects of religion are borne out of ignorance of the nature and workings of meteorology. This may leave his "true" atomistic religion intact. The same issues arise about what is supposed to have been said in *On Tranquillity*, believed to have been written by Democritus. Here, he essays to explain religious conscience - such as guilt, belief in here-after, and divine retribution - as arising from unphilosophic temper. Something similar appears in *On the Things in Hell* where postmortem bliss, is by implication, dismissed:

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149 Cf. 'The ancients, seeing what happens in the sky - e.g., thunder and lightning, and thunderbolts and conjunctions of stars and eclipses of sun and moon - were afraid, believing gods to be the cause of these' (A75). This does not ground atheism yet. At most he means that those meteorological occurrences are not caused by gods.

Some men, ignorant of the dissolution of mortal nature, but conscious of the miseries of their life, crawl, during their life-time, in troubles and fears, inventing falsehoods about the time after their death (B297).

Perhaps there is no such thing as life after death, perhaps the stories about postmortem life are only untrue. But neither consideration implies atheism. These observations on religious psychology mark the twilight zone between the wanings of Presocratic cosmological philosophizing and the waxings of Sophistic qualms and critical reflections about the phenomenology of religion.

14 Some sophists and others on religion

By this time the Sophists, more accurately some of them, and the atomists contemporaneous with them in the 5th and early 4th century, had began to raise the matter of religious experience as an epistemological issue. The classic aphorism of Protagoras - man is the measure of all things[150]- carries a *humanistic* mood that presumably reflects the general intellectual climate of the period. The tendency was to regard the *human factor* as the locus of truth-claims, as of virtues. But it is also perceived that the human condition is subject to historical, local, physiological, and other relative or accidental circumstances. There are two conspicuous victims in this new humanism. The first is Presocratic rationalism with its assumption that it is possible to obtain by reason alone knowledge of the nature of divine reality. The second is the hitherto settled acceptance of doctrines of

150 Reported in Plato's *Theae.* 152a; *Craty.* 386a.

tradtional ethics and religion. These are now open to question or sceptical nonchalance, at least. Protagoras is reported as saying:

> About the gods I cannot know either that (or how) they are (or exist) or are not (or do not exist)...For many things prevent one from knowing: the obscurity, and the life of man, which is short.[151]

Some of the new rational relativists like Prodicus and his contemporary, Critias, were straight-forward atheists.[152] Prodicus teaches that things that in nature have been wholesome and nutritive for mankind have been looked upon as gods by the earliest of men and honoured accordingly.[153] And Themistius (B5) has Prodicus explain all religious beliefs in terms of agricultural fears and hopes. Among non-sophists Critias, in his Satyr play *Sisyphus*, makes the hero say that religion was invented for its solemnity as a permanent sanction of morals and law. Of equal interest is the historically obscure Diogoras of Melos, who probably lived in the second half of the 5th century. He is reported to have committed "verbal impieties about foreign rites and festivals" [i.e., the Eleusinian mysteries]. He also "made the downright assertion that god does not exist at all" (Athenagoras, lll, 9).[154] An anecdote of Diagoras has him turn atheist when he became a victim of injustice; an opponent had successfully

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151 DK B4.

152 The attribution of the *Sisyphus* to Critias is by Sextus, *Adv. Math.* 9, 54. The theistic representation of the divine sanction of law and the legal institutions of the democratic state of Athens is dramatised in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*.

153 Sextus, *Adv. Math.* ix, 18 (Prodicus B5). Sextus has a list of the things which Prodicus has in mind; the sun, the moon, rivers, springs, lakes, meadows, just as the Nile was worshipped by the Egyptians.

154 Cf. Cicero *de Nat. Deo.*, 1.63

perjured him (Sextus, *adv. math.*,1X.52). He concludes from his personal experience, and perhaps from others', that injustice thrives unpunished by gods. Thrasymachus and Theognis had said something similar:

> The gods do not observe human affairs; for they would not pass over the greatest of human goods, justice; for we see that men do not use justice (B8).[155] The gods ought indeed to love the just and to hate and punish the unjust; but alas, they do not; for the unjust evidently prosper (Theognis, 732-52).[156]

The problem of evil became acute in 5th century Athens. The dramatic poets are the best evidence of this.[157] The settled belief that gods sanction virtues are by now breaking down. The "strongman" ethics of Thrasymachus, Callicles and others, and of Athenian imperialist attitude towards the Melians and other satelite states of her empire, are adequate reflections of this. As soon as the independent objectivity of gods was questioned, the metaphysical basis of morals crumbled. It was into this moral-religious crisis that Socrates was born and educated, and it is his persuasive and rational response to this crisis that the next chapter will be concerned with

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155 Further on Thrasymachus see Aristodemus in Xenophon's *Memo.* i, iv. ll; cf. Plato's *Laws* 885b, 888c, 899e-903a

156 Cf. Thucydides ii 53, 4, who writes about the effect of the Athenian plague of 430BC thus; 'no fear of god or law of man restrained the people, who judged worship and no worship to be indifferent because they saw that all perished equally'. Epicurus' gods do observe the miserable lives of mankind, but they simply do not care: though omniscient they are not practically benevolent. Cf. 'The statements of most men about the gods are not cognition but false suppositions, according to which the greatest harms befall the bad from the gods, and the greatest benefits the good' (*Letter to Menoeceus.*, 124).

157 See, for instance, Euripides' *Bellorophon* fr. 286.

15 Summary

So far, I have, I hope, shown that the scrappy evidence notwithstanding, Presocratic thought is full of arguments to divine first principles, *archai*, who exist necessarily as realities which are ultimately presupposed in an account of the universe often conceived as a dynamic, orderly system. The *archē* is conceived as an *embodied* supreme and eternal power, with a causal function expressed in motion. Hence, we may say that the Presocratic *archē*-gods are motion-gods. First, it is assumed that the universe is a cosmos; it is then argued to the conclusion that the fundamental ground of the cosmos must be a living, divine cause and principle of motion. The rationality of divine motion is intimated in the frequent equation of the nature of the power of the *arche* with Mind or Reason.[158]

By a peculiar but distinctive argument, Parmenides, less acutely followed by Melissus, brought out with logical acumen and vehemence, largely unarticulated assumptions that had guided the

158 This is implied in the function of Anaximader's *apeiron* which systematically and regularly equilibrates the encroachments of the elements on each other, and by which the architetonic symmetries of the celestial dispositions are made. It is also implied in the regularities of rarefaction and condensation by which Anaximenes' Air maintains the cosmos. Philolaus' fr. B21 talks about the universe as containing two basic principles - one of which is associated with mind (*nōi*) which is ever-circling divine, and something else (presumably body) which is ever-changing mortal. According to Diogenes, Air must have mind/intelligence as an *archē* of the cosmos. Heraclitus' *Logos*, which accounts for the mathematically expressible mutations in the ever-living Fire, is identified with the Wise one. Xenophanes' God, abiding its place eternally, moves with the will of his *mind*, just as Empedocles' sphere-god darts across the Love-engendered cosmos with the holiness of his mind. Anaxagoras supreme principle is Reason. Even the logically-minded Parmenides, identifies Being with thinking.

rationality of preceding cosmological speculations. He argues, somewhat to the effect, that an *archē* qua *archē* must satisfy certain conditions: since an *archē* is postulated or inferred as that which causes and explains that which comes to be and perishes (i.e., moves in place, changes colour, state or condition, etc.), it follows that the *archē* qua *archē* must itself remain self-identical - since it cannot undergo change and still be an *archē*; it must be complete, perfect, self-sufficient, viz., not lacking anything or not causally dependent on that which it explains), it must be immovable, ungenerable and hence eternal; it must be colourless, etc.[159] These characterisations (and many more) of an *archē* are consistent and continuous with the divine content of Presocratic philosophies.

It may be objected, that what all this suggests is that the Presocratics are concerned with a rational and scientific explanation of the universe, especially so because they adopt causal explanations and often specify this causality in terms of motion, with the consequence that much that would otherwise count as relevant to religion is rejected. While such a conclusion would be perfectly true, we will answer that it is false if it implies, what is not supported by the evidence, a distinction between science and religion. For what is rejected here are

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159 Not only did Parmenides influence Empedocles, Anaxagoras and the atomists who tried to accommodate his conceptual demand of what *archē* qua *archē* must be, but also his influence can be felt in Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. In Socratic dialectics, a Socratic form (e.g., the form of the pious) is the "same as itself", "itself by itself" "a single form" (*Euthy.* 5c-d). So too are Platonic Forms and Aristotle's first substance. As we shall see, the kind of realities which answer to these characterisations of changelessness, causal supremacy, etc., are, in these subsequent systems of thought, divine. Thus divine reality answers to a systematic characterisation of some sort.

anthropomorphic traits, which are not necessarily entailed by the *basic* religious conception of god. Furthermore, the model of explaning a thing by specifying or tracing its divine origin or its underlying divine cause is a logical continuation of traditional religious thinking and the mythological cosmogonies, whose basic content is theological. Thus Eros, Hope, Peace, Sleep, etc, are examples of traditional divinities which serve to explain human love, hope, peace, sleep, etc. It is no objection to my conclusion even if the Presocratics were unaware of this. What is required to be shown, which I hope I have done, is that the theological or religious language so common in Presocratic thinking is not peripheral, but lies deep in the content of Greek thinking. On my reading, the basic difference between Hesiod and Homer on the one hand, and the Presocratics on the other, is not in the content of thought - which is theological and religious in both cases, but in the structure of thought; the former assume the existence of gods, the latter argue to their existence by accountable steps of reasoning. We may therefore see the Presocratics as putting on a more rational and intelligible basis, the naively grasped conception of divine power(s) endowed with properties in terms of which they serve as the ultimate presuppositions in an account of the world or cf features in the world.

The mark of Socratic philosophy is its ethical orientation, an apparently significant break from the cosmological speculations of the Presocratics. But, as we shall see next, Socrates neither departs from the critical argumentation of his predecessors nor break from the traditional thought which explains existing things as fundamentally grounded in divine first principles.

THREE

SOCRATES' RELIGION AND THEOLOGY OF RATIONAL ETHICS

1 The historical Socrates

Socrates was executed in 399B.C. after a jury found him guilty of impiety or atheism.[1] He had been indicted with (ia) refusing to recognise the gods recognised by the *polis*, (ib) believing (*nomizei*)[2] or making (*poiei*) new divinities (*daimonia kaina*),[3] and (ii) corrupting the youth.[4] As to why Socrates

1 Socrates' paraphrase of the charges brought against him (*Ap.* 29a) - '...that I do not believe that there are gods' (*ou nomizo theous einai*) implies that he understood the charges to include an imputation of atheism (*atheos*, 29c5), in the sense that he does not believe in the existence of the traditional gods. At 26b-c Socrates begins to interrogate Meletus as to the precise meaning of the charges. Does he wish to say Socrates believes in some gods or that he does not believe in any at all? The answer is, 'you disbelieve in gods altogether'. This is confirmed by the first part of his defence which aims at dissociating himself from natural philosophers like Anaxagoras who are believed to be atheists. (The atheism of the Presocratics must be understood to mean only that the gods they argued for are radically different from the gods of civic religion). Some scholars think - not implausibly - that both the indictment against Socrates and its success was politically motivated. See, for example, Adams' (1901) Introduction to his edition of the *Apology* (Cambridge University Press), pp. xxiv-xxvi

2 *Ap.* 24b6-9; "*Nomizei*" equivocates between "observing a *nomos*" i.e., customary law or usage (in civic religion, according to our present context), or "believing" (holding or accepting) it. That it is the latter alternative which is meant has been noted in no. 1 above and will be made clear below.

3 *Euthyphro* 3b has "make (*poieten*) new divinities". The indictment preserved by Diogenes Laertius (DL, II, 40), which probably rests on the authority of Favorinus has "introducing" (*eisegoumenos*). The difference, if any is negligible.

4 Probably (ia) and (ib) constitute a specific form of (ii).

came to be indicted at all the dramatic biographies in Aristophanes' comedy, *Clouds*, Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, and Plato's early works are the main evidence worth considering.

Aristophanes represents Socrates as belonging both to the class of natural philosophers and sophists (cf. *Ap.* 18b5ff.). He is portrayed as one who runs a "Thinkery" (*phrontistērion*) where disciples attend his lectures. He appears as the foremost exponent of *meteorosophia*, speculation about the physical nature of the heavens or, more generally, about lofty, abstruse matters, such as the ultimate nature of the universe. By understanding natural philosophy as speculating that the ultimate realities are no more than physical stuffs like air, ether, fire, etc, the natural philosophers appear to be denying or undermining the anthropomorphically conceived gods. As a sophist, Socrates would also make eristic arguments his stock in trade. In this too he is portrayed as contributing to undermining the settled system of ethical-religious beliefs by "making the worse argument appear better and the better worse". Socratic dialectics, which proceeds from people's settled beliefs and usually ends in refuting them has enough superficial semblance to eristic practice to warrant this mistaken imputation by the less philosophically acute minds. Typically, the Greek *polis* has a religious foundation; gods/goddesses patronize its socio-political order and instutions.[5] Hence, observing the religious *nomoi* is an important evidence of civic piety but is not always enough. The religious foundation of the *polis* was equally threatened by any teaching which offended the sensibilities of public piety. A teaching which denied or implied denial of the existence of gods

[5] As was dramatised in the case of Athens in e.g., Aeschylus' *Eumenides*

as traditionally conceived is a case of impiety. Herein lies the gravamen of the indictment against Socrates: how can he satisfy the jury that his philosophical activity implies no undermining of the settled assumptions about the basic elements of the socio-political order, namely, the gods as traditionally conceived, when Socratic dialects proceed from people's settled beliefs and usually ends in showing that such beliefs are viciously circular, self-contradictory or inconsistent?

In his defence, Socrates vigorously denies that he is a sophist, a natural philosopher or an atheist.[6] The *Clouds* - which is evidence to the contrary - is such a farcical burlesque, Aristophanes himself may not have intended it as a historical documentation, much less as a philosophical assessment of the intellectual history of Greece at this time. Xenophon's portrait of Socrates, is equally suspect. He is not above putting into Socrates' mouth Xenophontic opinions.[7] If this is negligible, still, it is nearly impossible to understand why, on his account, Socrates was ever indicted for impiety in the first place. A model of conventional piety, Xenophon's Socrates never fails to fulfil his religious obligations. Greek piety has two sides: (a) conscientious participation in ritual observances, prayers, and sacrifices; and (b) believing or accepting the gods of the community. It would seem that (a) and (b) are complementary, so that the one without the other would be inadequate evidence of piety. Xenophon seems to

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6 Although the *Phaedo* (96aff.) suggests that he once entertained naturalistic explanations. Still, this is not inconsistent with Socrates's denial in the *Apology* (19b) that he ever inquired into 'things below the earth and in the sky and made the weaker or wrong argument defeat the stronger or right argument'.

7 See Field (1967, p 135-45).

claim that Socrates satisfies both (a) and (b). On (a) he states categorically that Socrates offered public and private sacrifices; 'he offered sacrifices constantly and made no secret of it, now in his home, now at the altars of the state temple...' (*Memo.* i, 1, 2). Socrates dutifully observes all the sacrificial observances of the *polis* (*bid.* i, 3, 1). Plato corroborates this at *Eud.* 302c, where Socrates says: 'I have my own altars and my own religion, and family prayers and all that sort of thing, as much as any other Athenian'. This is, of course, a private, family religion. But with reference to Socrates' scrupulous respect for the laws of the *polis* (as represented in the *Crito*), there is no good reason to doubt his piety regarding the religious observances,[8] public or private.

On (b) - the intellectual aspect of piety - Xenophon represents Socrates not only as believing in the traditional gods, but also as essaying a theological argument to the existence of a divine Mind who providently guides and directs the course of events in the cosmos at large. Again, Xenophon's Socrates is a wise man who defines the virtues and inoffensively instructs his associates in

[8] Martin Nilsson (1969), observes that when evidence of citizenship was required, an Athenian citizen proved his civic rights by referring to his altar of Zeus *Herkeios*, to Apollo *Patrōos* - i.e., "inherited from father", and to his ancestral graves. More than once in Plato, Socrates is made to pray. At *Symp.* 220d, e.g., Socrates prays to the sun. At *Phdr.* 279b, he prays to the gods thus: 'grant that I may become fair within, and that such outward things as I have may not war against the spirit within me. May I count him rich who is wise, and as for gold, may I possess so much of it as only a temperate man might bear and carry with him'. At Xenophon's *Memo.* 1, 3, 2, Socrates is reported as usually praying to gods to give him simply what was good, thinking that the gods best knew what kinds of things were good. The tone of these prayers, the content of their request, is consistent with a Socratic irony which dresses up less than a total commitment to religion as traditionally conceived with verbal concessions to public piety.

moral matters, although at *Memo.* i, 2, 3, Socrates never professes to teach virtue, and at *op. cit.* iv, 4, 9, Hippias is made to state that it was Socrates' practice never to state his own opinion. At i 1, 11ff., Xenophon denies that Socrates discoursed on the whole or about celestial phenomena. These apparent inconsistencies make Plato's position much more credible.

For in Plato, Socrates consistently claims ignorance in "higher matters", both in respect of things in the sky and below the earth, and specifically in the *Euthyphro* he is sceptical about stories which contribute to the system of traditional beliefs about the gods. Generally, the characteristic conclusions of his dialectical encounter with personalities who embody traditional wisdom and beliefs is negative and critical. And in those few moments of positive asseveration about gods, he gives the impression that, although he believes in gods, his conception of them is different from that of traditional religion. At *Phdr.* 229, for example, Plato makes Socrates answer the question whether he believes the legend of Boreas and Orithyia. He replies that it is not impossible to find natural events which explain the supernatural events alleged in legends: a girl killed by being blown onto the rocks by the north wind, becomes a maiden snatched by Boreas; only that he finds such stories charming and regards attempts to rationalise them a waste of time, and furthermore, an ungracious one. In the same dialogue, having made a speech in condemnation of Love (or Desire, *Erōs*), Socrates intends to break off the conversation but is forbidden to do so by his "divine sign". He takes this to mean that in his speech he has blasphemed against *Erōs* who is a "divine thing" (242e), and that he must recant. He does so by saying that some madness under which he had included romantic love is of

divine gift, and he proceeds to praise divine madness for the benefits it confers on man through prophecy, religious frenzy, poetry, and passion.[9] He then elucidates the divinity of *Erōs* as the innate force which operates on men to bring them to the divine sphere of gods and Forms. By this he suggests that *Erōs* is not in itself an independent object of religious worship, contrary to what is traditionally believed.

Thus one can see in Plato why Socrates could have been indicted for impiety or atheism. An under-current of revisionary critique can be felt in his verbal concessions to public piety. I do not imply that Plato's dialogues represent, word by word, circumstance by circumstance, what Socrates said and did. Only that the early Platonic works appear to embody the philosophical significance of the Socratic philosophical approach; the full implications of the dialectical encounters, its logical-metaphysical, and human side too, viz., the paradox and irony (cf. *Symp.* 218d6-219a1; *R.* 337a) which contribute, in relevant contexts, to a subtility of critical attitude but also a positive contribution to the ethical-religious tradition. The following discussions, centred mainly on the *Apology* and *Euthyphro*, is an attempt to substantiate this conclusion.

2 The *Apology*

In his defence Socrates insists that he is pious and a theist, and appeals to his practice of *philosophia*. He claims that his dialectical *elenchus*, that method of close and systematic cross-

[9] That these may possibly be Plato's general attitude to traditional religion or myths is only part of the historical problem of differentiating Plato and Socrates.

examination of those who profess to be wise, is according to god (*kata theon*, 23b): for it is a testing of the pronouncement of the oracle at Delphi, according to which Socrates is the wisest of his generation. As he is to discover, his being wisest means, paradoxically, that he knows at least one thing which the poets, politicians, craftsmen, i.e., the wise of the day, do not; the extent of his own ignorance.[10] We might say that he alone, among his contemporaries, embodies the Delphic motto - Know Thyself - the divine injunction demanding moderation and self-knowledge on the part of mortals in recognition of the limits which distinguish their powers and capabilities in relative inferiority to the superior powers of the gods. Socrates claims that his practice of *philosophia* consists in "assisting the god" by showing to men who pretend to wisdom that they are really not wise (23b6-7), and that in reality, true wisdom belongs to god (23a5-8). He implies, then, that his characteristically destructive and refutative method - which has produced so many enemies - is employed to bring home to men the realisation that the wisdom they claim to possess is no real wisdom, and that nonetheless, there is an optimum wisdom of the divine kind. He claims that his philosophical activity is in obedience to a command by, and a service to, the god.[11] Thus *philosophia* his way is a religious service and duty. His pious acceptance of this duty borders on the fanatical; for he insists that while he lives, he will never relinquish this duty under any circumstances - even on pain of being sentenced to death or of disobeying the laws of the state (29c-e). This way of

[10] Socrates is not, I presume, claiming the extreme, viz., he is *absolutely* ignorant. See *Ap.* 25d9e3, *contra* 21b4-5

[11] *keluei ho theos, huperesian*, 30a; *latreian*, 23c

defending himself creates the deepest pathos of dramatic irony; a zealously pious and theistic man, as he claims, is standing trial for his life for impiety and atheism.

Although powerful, Socrates' defence does not convince the jury - as far as the charges go; he does not prove that he is pious in the traditional sense. While the charges specifically demand that he prove acceptance of or belief in the gods of the *polis* (Athens), it is to the pan-hellenic god at Delphi that he declares devotion. It would not be arbitrary, then, to think that the piety claimed by Socrates with respect to the oracle is suspect, given the decline of the oracle's veridical authenticity and the secularised dimunition of its prestige at this time.[12] Indeed we may suppose that Socrates felt an intense personal devotion to the god at Delphi. But this is to be juxtaposed with the curious and typical irony that pervades Socrates' whole approach to philosophy. Typically he claims to know nothing, nevertheless he maintains, *inter alia*, that virtue is knowledge, that no one desires bad/evil things, and that all who pursue evil/bad things do so involuntarily.[13] So we have reason to suspect Socrates' claim to traditional piety which has to do with a submissive reverence of the gods as traditionally conceived. Indeed, Socrates is within tradition when he says that in reality wisdom belongs to god (*Ap.* 23a). However, we shall see shortly that Socratic wisdom is rated higher than and is something entirely different from prophecies. Consequently, it would seem that Socratic wisdom would be distinguished from the

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12 The oracle had become suspect to most intelligent men at this time. It had supported Sparta during the Peloponnesian wars and there were stories of how Lysander attempted to manipulate the oracle. See further Parke (1967, chapter lll); also Nilsson (1940, rpt. 1972, p. 129-132)

13 *G.* 468c5-7; *Meno* 77b-78b; *Prt.* 358c.

particular matters of oracular pronouncements associated with the god at Delphi.[14]

Apart from his claim that his philosophical way is at the behest of the god, Socrates defends his claim to be pious in another way: he has had from childhood a *daimonion*, a personal, divine voice which never urges him on but dissuades him from courses of action he intends to undertake (31c-d). He has also received revelations in dreams. However, although the *daimonion* and the dreams are part of the furniture of traditional religion, they remain vague, private forms of piety. They do not constitute a proof of belief in the gods of the *polis*. Moreover, although Socrates may truly believe in the divinity of the *daimonion* (31c8, 31d1) and the dreams, there is an ironic flair in his invocation of these in defence of the charge of impiety or atheism. First of all, the *daimonion* is concerned with mundane, even trivial, matters-of-fact, and least of all concerned with religious matters.[15] Secondly, his general attitude to divine inspiration is a telling commentary on the status which he gives to his *daimonion*, and the dreams. The *Ion* carries a discussion of the relationship between divine inspiration and knowledge, and concludes that only so long as one has no reason (*nous*) in him, or is out of his senses (*ekphrōn*, 534b5), is one able to make poetry

[14] As we shall see in the *Euthyphro*, Socrates takes issue with Euthyphro's belief, consistent with tradition, that the gods are superhumans, which implies that they too quarrel, i.e., as far as their humanity goes. It follows also that in their humanity, the gods would quarrel most of all about what is good and bad, just and unjust. However, a truly wise agent, for Socrates, knows in the absolute, irrefutable sense what is good and bad, just and unjust. Since ignorance of good and bad is the basic ground for quarrelling about moral issues, the gods as traditionally conceived would hardly qualify as truly wise agents.

[15] See *Phdr.* 242c; cf. *Alc.* 1, 103a; *Eud.* 272e; *Theae.* 151a.

and chant prophecy (534b). Thus, while agreeing that a rhapsode, poet, seer, etc., are divinely inspired (*entheon*, 533e4, *enthousiazontōn*, 533e5), and are possessed by god (*katechomenoi*, 533e7), he refuses to grant divine revelation the status of knowledge or truth, contrary to the traditional view. The same conclusion is reached in the *Meno* (99c-d), where he likewise attributes divine inspiration to a statesman who constantly gets things done rightly without any real, conscious knowledge of what is right. It would seem that by "divinely inspired" Socrates means the *givenness* of an extraordinary power or resource which is beyond our rational control and by which we get things rightly done. This would suggest that Socrates thinks that appeal to divine revelations in dreams and to a *daimonion* would curry defensive weight as far as public piety is concerned, since his concept of divine inspiration is superficially consistent with the logic of traditional religion, viz., belief in causal powers transcending those of man and affecting his life. Socrates may endorse the logic of this belief without endorsing the specific determinations of those powers, which is why the dreams are vague enough, and his own *daimonion* lacks any determination whatsoever. He may also believe in the practical efficacy of these *given* resources, as is the case with his own *daimonion*. But he knows that for positive truth and wisdom, it is to philosophy that we must turn. Indeed, the *daimonion* provides practical guidance in particular matters of fact, but philosophy is sufficiently independent of inspiration, such that while both can compatibly co-exist in the same person, the latter can still be the cause of impiety or atheism even while the former is believed to

have divine origin. Let us return to the *Apology*.[16]

By an indirect way, Socrates argues to the conclusion that he does believe in the gods. He attempts to show that his accusers are themselves ignorant and confused. First of all, they confuse him with Anaxagoras, when they impute to him Anaxagoras' cosmological thesis acording to which the sun is a stone and the moon is made of earth. Socrates' reply to this mistaken imputation is a question: 'do you suggest I do not believe that the sun and the moon are gods, as is the common belief of all mankind?' But to assume the common belief of men is not a proof that you hold it as it is. Nor was the religion of the *polis* founded on the cult of the sun and the moon. In another move, Socrates does a little *elenchus* on Meletus by way of proving his belief in the gods of the *polis*. Proceeding on the assumption that not he but his accuser is wise in the matters for which he is prosecuting him, he asks if Meletus claims he believes in some gods, only not those of the *polis* or in none at all? Meletus answers that Socrates does not believe in any at all (26b-c). Now Socrates' *daimonion* is well known, even to Meletus. Socrates then argues (27b), that if Meletus grants he believes and teaches others to believe in spiritual activities (*daimonia pragmata*), he ought necessarily to grant he believes in gods. For neither does anyone think that there are actions performed without agents to perform them, nor believe in spiritual actions but not in spiritual agents (27c); 'and we all take spirits (*daimonia*) to be gods or children of gods'. Thus the claim to be a recipient of an authentic spirit

16 Impiety and atheism are compatible with belief in gods and the divine, provided the concept of god or the divine is not consistent with basic beliefs about the gods as traditionally concieved.

entails the acceptance of the gods. The conclusion is an obvious contradiction for Meletus: Socrates believes and does not believe in the gods (of the *polis*). But the jury who, it seems, were not philosophically minded, were probably not impressed by logical contradictions in the prosecution's case or in the deductive implications for the defence's argument. One may speculate that nothing short of an easy and direct proof of positive belief in the gods of the *polis* will do.

Presumably in an answer to the claim that he corrupts the youth, Socrates counter-claims that he believes that no greater boon has befallen Athens than his service to the god (30a). This conviction is restated in the *Gorgias*, according to which Socrates is the only true practitioner of the political art. This is explained at 515b-c as making the citizens as good as possible (cf. 521d). Yet, his making citizens good has not involved taking public office. In the *Apology*, he explains this as due to his *daimonion*. As to how he makes the citizens good, he explains thus:

> I go about doing nothing but persuading you - young and old - to care not for the body (*sōmaton*) or for wealth (*chrēmata*) so much as virtue (*aretē*) of the soul (*psuchē*). I tell you that virtue (*aretē*) does not come from wealth but wealth and all other human goods (*ta...agatha*) - both public and private - from virtue (30b). (Are you not ashamed that you give your attention to acquiring as much wealth as possible and give no attention or thought to wisdom (*phronēsis*), truth and the perfection of your soul? - 29d9-e3)

Prima facie, this is hard to believe: (i) how does Socrates persuade people, when all we know of his philosophical way is that it usually ends in refuting their opinions? (ii) Socrates keeps a small list of traditional *aretai* - wisdom, temperance, justice,

piety, courage. But what does he mean by implying that truth and virtue of the soul are more important than and prior to the body, wealth, and all other human goods - public or private? (iii) How do (i) and (ii) constitute service to god? These issues, which cannot be treated fully here, lie beyond the *Apology*. Accordingly I discuss them in the following new section.

3 Socrates' humanistic religion

(i) The familiar feature of the Socratic dialogues is characteristically the systematic and logical cross-examination of propositions put forward by those who profess to be wise. The result is usually negative; the interlocutor is shown to be ignorant, contrary to his confident self-esteem. But the texts intimate that the negative dialectic has a positive, therapeutic or educational force.[17] *Inter alia*, dialectics purges the individual soul of pretentious dispositions and disposes one to the need to justify what underlies one's knowledge-claims. The end of Socratic ethics is action governed by reason, the intellectual component having to do with discernment of the good and the bad.[18] As action-oriented, the negative conclusions of dialectics bring the interlocutor to a degree of self-consciousness of the extent of his own ignorance. This is supposed to free him from the mistaken conceit of knowledge which produces unreflective, intemperate

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[17] See *Theae.* 149aff.; 151c5; *Soph.* 230d6-e3; *Ap.* 21c3-e2, 29e3-30a2; cf. *Ch.* 166c7-d6; *Soph.* 230c3-d4

[18] Socrates insists that any true definition of virtue includes knowledge of the good (cf. *Ch.* 174b11ff.; *La.* 198b5-199d). He somehow manages to give a utilitarian or a merely conventional facade to this radical idea by sometimes identifying what is good with what is lawful, beneficial or honourable (*Crito*; *G.* 470a-b, 476e, 477a).

action, and to make him calm and modest, as he comes to terms with knowledge of the limits of his own powers and proclivities.[19] By showing how ignorant one is in matters in which one self-confidently believed one was wise, one is made to see that one has yet to start on the road to true wisdom. True wisdom only begins at knowledge of the extent of your own ignorance. Apart from self-knowledge, another basic feature of dialectics is that it points to *ousiai* or *ideai* (essences or forms *in* things) rather than to the traditional gods as the highest realities and the only objects of knowledge in its highest sense. Dialectics implies that knowledge of forms offer a better alternative, and possibly a permanent solution, to the fluctuating, circular, inconsistent, and often contradictory beliefs about the gods, and the ethical values based on such beliefs. Our tentative conclusion, then, is that Socratic persuasion in dialectical negativity is aimed at creating an open-mindedness which is at the same time oriented towards a desire to be fulfilled with true wisdom by means of forms.

(ii) The focus of orientation in socratic persuasion is the soul distinguished from the body, as the seat of virtue or wisdom and truth. Is this distinction between soul and body real or merely conceptual? It is real, since soul but not body is distinguished as the primary source of physical character and of good and bad.[20] To say that 'life with a bad soul is even less worthwhile than life with a corrupt and diseased body' (*Cr.* 47c8-e1), is to imply a relation but also a real difference between soul and body.[21] The

[19] In the *Charmides* (167a1-7; cf. 166c7-dff; *Ap.* 21d1-7), Socrates casually examines the association of temperance with self-knowledge and knowledge of one's own knowledge and ignorance.

[20] Cf. *Ap.* 30b, *Ch.* 156d5-157b1; *Prt.* 313a, 351a-b.

same thesis appears in a long discussion of the relation of evil to happiness in the *Gorgias*, and there it depends on such a real distinction between bodily evil and psychic evil. *G*. 477c identifies three evils - poverty, disease and injustice as corresponding to material fortune, body and soul. It is then argued to a conclusion that evil of the soul - injustice - is the *most* shameful, the *most* painful and the *most* harmful. Consequently, the happiest of men is he who has no evil in his soul (478d). At *La*.185eff., psychic priority to body is emphasised when on the question of the education of the young, and on whether, specifically, the art of fighting in armour will improve the young, Socrates transforms the subject-matter at hand as really having to do with training the *souls* of the boys.[22] Hence, Socrates' adoption of Zalmoxian holistic therapy: the method of curing the whole - soul and body - by addressing, not the body but the soul with certain charms (*epōidai*) composed of "appropriate accounts" (*kaloi logoi*[23]).[24] Through this the soul

21 Consider also the exchanges at 47e-48a: 'Well, is life worth living with a body which is worn out and ruined in health? Certainly not. What about the part of us which is mutilated by wrong actions and benefitted by right one?....Or do we believe that this part of us, whatever it may be, in which right and wrong operate, is *less important than* the body? Certainly not'.

22 This is matched by the repeated mentioning of the legendary teacher of Socrates, Damon, in connection with training the character through the modalities of music. Cf. DK B4, B6, B7, A8.

23 *Kalos* is ambiguous: aesthetically, it connotes various kinds of beauty; functionally, it describes the successful performance of a characteristic task or purpose - as being, e.g., admirable, noble; morally, it stands for acceptability or propriety of persons, actions or things. Socrates did not distinguish these. It would seem, therefore, that a *kalos logos* induces a *kalē psuchē*, in all these senses. *Logos* is similarly ambiguous. Socrates and Plato employ it at many levels - ("word", "statement", "account", as sometimes opposed to tales or myths) - the highest of which stands for a

is to gain *sōphrosunē* (temperance), and head and body health (*Ch.* 155dff.). Thus the health of the body is epiphenomenal on the "health" of the soul.[25] It becomes axiomatic for Socrates, that

Socratic account (or definition), i.e., a dialectically irrefutable account. Context decides which sense is meant.

[24] The importance of "appropriate account" in relation to virtue in the soul is also the basis of Plato's critique of what he considers as Sophistic pretension to teach virtue, and also his critique of rhetorical practices of the day. At *Prt.* 313eff., Hippocrates is told that listening to doctrines (*mathemata*) from a sophist is receiving something good or bad, but rather something bad into your *psuchē*; and Socrates warns against the danger of "buying" such psychic wares without knowledge of good or bad. Cf. *Gorgias* (463e-466a, 510a-c), where Socrates understands cookery and rhetoric as quackeries passing off for true sciences of body and soul respectively. They treat of their subject-matter from convention or experience (*empeiria*) rather than from the nature and cause of what they treat. This compares to the true sciences of medicine/gymnastic correlated to justice/legislation - respectively concerned with body and soul. These are all practical, beneficial art-sciences rather than productive sciences: they do not make good objects; they make objects good. And they put their object, soul and body, in good condition. And they do this by knowledge of the nature and function of the subject-matter which they treat. Thus Socrates' endorsement of the Zalmoxian holistic therapy works on the analogy with medicine/gymnastic - justice/legislation only if these are purged of all preoccupation with means and *empeiria* as opposed to ends and a theory of the whole. He attributes a similar approach to Hippocrates at *Phdr.* 270c - the argument that it is impossible to know the nature of body without knowing the nature of the whole. See *Ancient Medicine* 20, where reliance on *empeiria* is not explicitly excluded. Socrates may have distorted or purified the Hippocratic theory in order to make the analogy work.

[25] Cf. Xenophon's *Memorabilia.* There, Socrates regards bodily regimen as the principal way to influence soul which is an important part of a human being, and is directly influenced by the same things that influence the body which also plays an important role in the achievement of over-all control in the affairs, demands, and temptations of one's life, although soul has properties quite distinct from body. At *Memo.* iii, I0, lff. Socrates asks a painter whether he tries to reproduce the character of the soul (*tēs psuchēs ethos*) as well as the image of the body; and this psychic character is manifested for Socrates in the eyes of the subject as they exhibit such qualities as kindness, moderation,

physical and ethical behaviour manifests the character or the state of the soul.[26]

As to why *aretē* has overriding importance over all other human goods, the answer is, at least partly, that Socrates combines a functionalist and a teleological view of life based on a real difference between body and soul. The end of life is *the good*: 'it is in pursuit of the good (*to agathon*) that we walk when we walk' (*G*. 468b1). Cf.: 'the good is the final end of all our actions; everything must be done for its sake' (*G*. 499e7-8). "The good" instead of "some good" (*agathon ti*) implies that life is inclined to some objective end for each or all individuals.[27]

intelligence or arrogance. At ibid. iii, 10, 6-8, the same line of argument is directed against a sculptor.

[26] Again cf. the hylomorphism of *Memo*. i.3.5, where Socrates is said to have trained body and soul by a regime that, barring accident, allows a confident, safe, and inexpensive life. As a consequence, he ate only enough to guarantee pleasure, drank only when thirsty, and at feasts advised others to avoid eating what would encourage further excess, holding such foods to be harmful to stomachs, brains and *psuchai*. Again (*Memo*. i, 21-5), he was in control of his sexual and gastronomic passions, able to endure heat and cold; he was generally moderate in his needs, making others cease from the corresponding vices by giving them confidence to care for themselves. He exercised only as much as would be good for his *psuchē*. Plato's Socrates endorses a more or less distinct and sovereign soul from the body, to the extent that no physical calamity can harm a good soul (*Ap*. 41d)

[27] In the *Lysis* it is argued that there is a primary object of love (*prōton philon*, 219d1) which explains all actions: whenever A chooses x, his choice of x must be explained by his choice of some end; he chooses x for the sake of y. His choice of y is explained in turn by his choice of z, and so on (219c1-5). The process cannot continue *ad infinitum*; we must recognise some object of desire not desired for any further end (291c5-d2). The primary or final object of desire is *the good* (200b1-7). When we seem to want a subordinate object chosen for the sake of something else, and appear to be concerned about it, our concern is really for the primary object, the final good (219d5-220b). All the intermediate goods

However, *the good* is associated with *aretē* of the soul as distinguished from body; its content[28] is identified with *eudaimonia* (spiritual well-being) - believed to be the supreme end of life, what we all want and want for its own sake[29]. By synecdoche, *aretē* is referred to as *sophia* (or *epistēmē*) - 'the *greatest* of goods which everywhere makes (*poiei*)[30] men succeed, since... she never errs but must needs be right in act and result, otherwise she could no longer be *sophia*' (*Eud.* 279c); and 'he with whom *sophia* is present (*sophias parousēs*) has no need of success (*eutuchias*) as well' (*ibid.* 280b, 280). These texts would seem to imply that *sophia* is necessary and sufficient for *eudaimonia*.[31] While accepting this conclusion, Vlastos (1991)[32] nevertheless argues, reasonably well, for the view that, although non-moral goods like "health", "wealth", etc., are negligible in value compared to *aretē*, they are goods nonetheless, and that we shall be happ*ier* with than without them, if, i.e., their use (add - or their acquisition) is guided by moral wisdom (*sophia*), otherwise they can make us miserable.

It is noteworthy, that the distinction between moral and non-

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are deceptive shadows (*eidōla*) of the good (219d).

28 The many components of *the good* are called goods: virtue, health, beauty, strength, etc., of which *aretē* is the chief and the most important component. Moreover, Socrates recognises "parts" of *aretē* all of which are "goods" of the soul, though they are at bottom one. Thus at *Prt.* 329c6-d1ff., it is argued that *aretē* is one thing, and the names of *aretē* are all names of that one thing. This may mean, not that the names of the *aretai* are synonymous but that they have the same reference though different senses - as the morning and evening star refer to the sun. See also *Prt.* 329eff.; *Meno* 72cff., 74-6; *La.* 190c-d, 199e.

29 *Eud.* 278e3-6, 280b1-6, 282a1-2; cf. *G.* 468c5-7, 466ff.

30 *Poiei* is causal, as the context shows.

31 See also *G.* 470e4-11; 507b8-c7; *Ap.* 30c6-d5, 41c8-d2; cf *Ly.* 215a6-7.

32 Ch. 8. See his summary at pp. 230-231

moral goods, the association of the former with what is necessary and sufficient for *eudaimonia*, and the fact that the beneficence of the latter is conditioned on the presence of moral wisdom (*sophia*), depends on a real distinction between soul and body, and on the thesis that behaviour takes its character from the state or condition of the soul. Further, the use of *sophia* by synecdoche for *aretē*, and the identification of the content of *the good* with *eudaimonia* confirm *aretē* or *the good* as a state or condition of the soul. Consequently, since *sophia* is the [key] property of god, and is also associated with *the good* of life, it follows that *sophia* is a divine and optimum state of the soul. And indeed Socrates often represents *aretē* as the "health" of the soul. He would therefore justify urging a primary need to acquire *aretē* before everything else by a belief that the optimum and divine condition of the *human* soul functions causally to determine how the acquisition and use of all other goods - bodily health, wealth, honour, etc. - conduce or will contribute to *the good* (of the soul). In this sense, *sophia* or *aretē* may be said to be productive of all other goods; for they are goods insofar as they are acquired or utilised wisely. On the other hand, *sophia* is constitutive of *the good* - the final, non-moral end of all actions. This teleological conception of life implies a functionalist view of *aretē*;[33] for, in view of the end - the good (of the soul) - actions and acquisitions may be evaluated and life itself may be judged to be lived well or badly. According to *Cr.* (48b), therefore, it is not living that is important, but living well, and this involves living justly and honourably.

[33] This would seem to apply generally to perceived goal-directed entities - to men as much as dogs, horses, tools (*R.* 335b6-c2; cf. *G.* 506d).

The functionalist conception of *aretē* is traditional and Homeric: *aretē* is excellent performance which is productive of valued results - honour, status, material goods, etc. By the 5th century, *aretē* comes to be expressed in *technical* excellence in a wide range of activities. Socrates thinks that life is to be lived artfully and scientifically, and this means to be fully guided by philosophical-moral wisdom (*sophia*).[34] But Socrates does not, *contra* tradition, identify *aretē* with physical or verbal behaviour. Rather, he traces the cause or origin of *aretē*-excellence to the soul, distinguished from body, and construes moral-*aretē* as excellent performance resulting from the soul's being in excellent condition or state[35] understood on an analogy with bodily health (cf. *G*. 474c-480). He seems to combine the Sophistic claim of teachability, and hence, knowability of *aretē* with the Homeric association of *aretē* with functional excellence. But he rejects the conception of *aretē* as excellent performance in competitive supremacy, a Homeric conception which, for the types of Thrasymachus or Callicles, entails the subordination or rejection of civic piety, viz., restraints shown in temperance and justice by recognition that they are divinely sanctioned by the gods.

Such a Calliclean conception of *aretē*, Socrates might have thought, (a) misconceives the function of life and (b) ignores the real difference between soul and body. By (a) people think that pleasure *simpliciter*, the acquisition of public honour, wealth and the power to out-compete or bring others under your control and manipulation, are the most important things in life. For this

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[34] I have already mentioned Socrates' analogical identification of virtue and the arts and sciences. See chapter one, no. 39; cf. no. 37 infra.

[35] Cf. *R*. 353d3-e11

reason a man needs only *seem* but not be really just and temperate, if only to avoid public opprobrium or punishment.[36] For Socrates, this is to put the horse before the cart. For, insofar as wealth, honour, pleasure, etc., are thought to be goods, they presuppose *the good*, the having of which is sufficient for the permanent satisfaction of the *self* which all strivings aim at benefitting. (b) In consequence of the inability to discern a real difference between soul and body, the good of life is supposed to be gratification of every particular desire to the utmost, as if to suppose it to be the greatest good of the body to have the utmost possible satisfaction of all the appetites without any consideration of health. Callicles, for example, maintains that supreme *eudaimonia* consists in having as many and diverse desires as possible, provided only that we have the opportunity of satisfying them (*G*. 491e-492a). For him, *eudaimonia* is the life of pleasure which consists in maximum flow (493dff.). For Socrates, however, the Calliclean model of life is like a leaky, rotten vessel which one is compelled to keep filling day and night or else suffer the extremities of pain. No one can be *eudaimon* whose life consists in replenishing ever-devouring cravings which are ever-receiving, and never have received satisfaction. Against this, Socrates puts forward the picture of a temperate man, the one whose soul is

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[36] Socrates' encounters with Callicles and Polus in the *Gorgias*, with Thrasymachus in the *Republic*, contain historical evidence of this neo-Homeric conception of *aretē*. In the *Republic*, Glaucon and Adeimantus observe that the conventional recommendation of justice was not based on the intrinsic value of justice as such: they were to be practised for the sake of rewards and repute due to opinion (whether of gods or of men). To illustrate this Glaucon asks us to conceive a situation where the just man had an unlimited power to do what he pleased with impunity. He concludes that if the unjust had such a power, no one could be found of such adamantine character as to persevere in justice... (358eff.)

ordered, and therefore in satisfaction with himself (493e). That is to say, given the real difference between soul and body, every desire or every object of desire has a limited value which must be strictly kept in regard to any other, and in primary reference to the good of the soul. Knowledge of the good of the soul, therefore, necessitates a structure of desires and satisfactions. Hence, Socrates conceives virtue as a kingly or super-ordinate science of living; knowledge of the good of the soul is needed to enable us to use rightly the products of other sciences.[37] The spiritual priority of *aretē* over health, wealth, honour, etc., therefore, depends a real difference between soul and body, on Socrates' teleological and functional conception of life, on the identification of the end of life with *eudaimonia* (spiritual well-being), and on the belief that this end is attainable chiefly by *aretē*.

But if the difference between soul and body is real and even crucial to Socrates' ethics, as I claim, is a separable soul entailed by the difference? Orphic independence of soul from body is hardly present in the Socratic dialogues.[38] Socrates may have thought that the soul is divine (*Memo.* iv 3, 14) or can be made to achieve divinity by moral-intellectual excellence. He admits at *Eud.* 302d-e that gods are animals insofar as they are ensouled. But although the concept of god entails immortality, he seems to have no firm beliefs about the after-life. At *Ap.* 29a-b, he claims that no man really knows what happens after death. He does not know whether death is good or bad (37b7-8). The proper attitude

[37] See *Ch.* 174b1-175d1, 173a8-d; *Eud.* 289b-c; 281d2-e1, 291c-d; *Alc.* II, 146d7-e3.

[38] I consider the *Meno* and *Gorgias* as a sort of transition between the early Socratic and middle Platonic dialogues.

is to recognise one's ignorance in this regard, and to attend to the only concern of any importance - doing what is right. For our first religious duty is to search for truth, wisdom and the perfection of our souls. However, at 40c, he speculates that death is *either* the absence of consciousness *or* a change in the form of an emigration (*metoikēsis*) of the soul. This way of putting the matter means that he does not know either way. Indeed the second alternative is characterised as "according to what is said" (40c7); "if what we are told is true" (40e6). It would seem, therefore, that he does not have any firm beliefs about an "after-life" or about the Orphic doctrine of metempsychosis. He seems to hold that *if* there *is* an after-life, life continues there, it seems, in ways not very different from here (41), except that there will be better judgement, more happiness and immortality there, and also other fine men to converse with, "if what we are told is true". He believes that his accusers cannot harm him because divine law (*themis*) does not permit a better man to be harmed by a worse man (30c7-d2), and that the fortunes of a good man are not a matter of indifference to the gods (41c-d). This must mean, that since the state of our soul is the only matter of first and final importance, and given that there is a real difference between body and soul, no bodily calamity can harm the good soul. If we add to all this Socrates' conviction that to a good man no harm comes either in life or after death (41d), it would seem reasonable to infer that he most probably regarded a virtuous soul as the supreme ideal of life the attainment of which is, at least, necessary to guarantee a permanent satisfaction of all our basic needs, hopes and desires, whether in this life or in some other possible life. Such a conviction, which implies that things are so

organised as to be inexorably conducive to human goodness, is religious, but it is also humanistic, insofar as it is not motivated by any firm belief in an after-life, while being fully motivated by a faith in the adequacy of our innate capacity to attain *the good* of life.

(iii) From this point of view we may now reasonably guess a tentative answer to our third question. We have seen that Socrates used dialectical *elenchus* as a negative form of persuasion to bring to his fellow countrymen a forceful, if painful recognition of the extent of their ignorance, and thereby to open their minds up towards a humble beginning in the search for true wisdom, by means of forms. 'No one really knows what happens after death', but Socrates knows that the function of life is to be truly, i.e., virtuously wise. And true wisdom belongs to god. Thus, when Socrates claims that no greater boon has befallen Athenians than his service to the god - and this refers to his practice of *philosophia*; when he exhorts his fellow citizens to care primarily for *aretē*; and when he devises dialectics to promote recognition both of the need and the means to be truly wise, he seems to be philosophising in the service of a "god" who is a perfect exemplification of virtue-wisdom, an agent truly wise in the knowledge of forms. This "god" will not be the god at Delphi or generally, the traditional mythological gods who fail to satisfy even ordinary human criteria of *aretē*. Socrates, however, manages to give a conventional face to this by proxy, i.e., by reference to the god at Delphi, who has given a sign to Socrates to rouse Athenians from their ignorant complacency - a psychic pathology which seems to him to be the real cause of Athens

socio-political ills - to the need to be truly wise, the only real salvation which must begin with each citizen undergoing psychic therapy of the sort which the Socratic *elenchus* provides.[39] This suggests that Socrates must have had a different conception of "god", "service to god", and hence, of "piety". This is not merely plausible if we take account of his well known irony, but also there are hints in the *Euthyphro* to suggest that this is most probably true.

4 The *Euthyphro*

We have argued that Socrates believes in god(s), but not the gods of traditional religion. Our tentative conclusion is that a Socratic god is the perfect exemplication of virtue-wisdom. The *Euthyphro*, I believe, obliquely confirms this conclusion, and supports also the anxiety of the Athenian public about the critical implications for traditional religion and ethics of Socratic dialectics.[40] As I understand them, these critical implications refer to a basic doctrinal presupposition which motivates the typical Socratic question, What is (*the*) x? where "(*the*) x" is a substantive (e.g., a noun) or a substantivised ethical term (usually, a definite article + a singular neuter or singular feminine adjective). The subject of inquiry in the *Euthyphro* is *the pious* (*to hosion*, 12e, used alternatively with *to eusebes*, 5c). Traditionally, *"hosios"* means what the gods approve for man. Alternatively, a person is *hosios* whose behaviour is in

[39] Cf. 'It seems to me that he [the god at Delphi] is not referring literally to Socrates but has merely taken my name as an example ... to tell us that human wisdom has little or no value' (*Ap.* 23a7-b3).

[40] This is not to suggest that the prosecution or condemnation of Socrates is justified.

consonance with divine requirements. *Eusebeia* is a religious behaviour that proceeds from good dispositions. The two complement each other, and the translation "pious" is roughly adequate to characterise both.

Euthyphro, a religious expert and a seer (3c),[41] is about to prosecute his father for homicide by culpable negligence leading to the death of his labourer.[42] He meets Socrates at the porch of the king-archon. He is surprised to find out the charges brought against Socrates. Euthyphro seems unable to understand what "new gods"[43] Socrates is charged with making, unless they refer to his *daimonion* of which he is familiar. While Euthyphro marvels with Socrates at the knowledge and wisdom of the young accuser who claims to *know* how the young are corrupted, Socrates is equally struck, not merely by Euthyphro's apparently impudent behaviour - attempting to prosecute his own father - but by the incredible confidence by which he claims *knowledge* of divine matters. Socrates exclaims:

> Good heavens, Euthyphro! Surely the crowd is *ignorant* of the way things ought to go. I fancy it is not correct for any ordinary person to prosecute his own father on this charge, but only for a man already *far advanced in point of wisdom* (4a-b).

Euthyphro, both by his practical attempt to indict his father, and by his public reputation as a religious expert, claims to be pious and to know what piety is. For Socrates, however, *to be* pious

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41 Cf. *Craty.* 396d-e, 400a

42 For the historical and legal merits of the case, see Allen (1970, pp. 20-23)

43 The plural, *daimonia kaina*, in the charges may refer to Socrates' personal *daimonion*, and the Air and Ether of Aristophanes' *Clouds* that were insinuated as his personal deities.

is *to know* piety. Accordingly, Socrates will demand that Euthyphro prove that he *knows* piety. Socrates is anxious to be Euthyphro's pupil, so that properly informed, he could refute Meletus' charges against him. Euthyphro, accepting the challenge, confidently believes that, were he in court, he would quickly find the weak spot in Meletus' position (5a-b). With such a promising assurance, Socrates asks:

> What sort of thing is the pious and the impious in connection with murder and other things? Or is not the pious itself by itself (*auto autoi*) the same in every action (*tauton en pasēi praxei*), and, on the other hand, is not impiety the opposite of all piety, always the same with itself and whatever is to be (*an mellēi*) impious possessing some one form (*mian tina idean*, 5c-d)?

Euthyphro replies with an ostensive definition:

> ...the pious is what I am doing now, prosecuting the wrongdoer...whether it be your father or mother...and not to prosecute would be impious. Does not mankind believe that Zeus is the most excellent and just among the gods? And these same men admit that Zeus shackled his own father [Cronus] for swallowing his [other] sons unjustly, and that Cronus in turn had gelded his father [Uranus] for like reasons? (5dff.)[44]

Socrates responds:

There, Euthyphro, you have the reason why the charge is brought against me. It is because, whenever people tell such stories about the gods, I find it hard to accept; and so, it seems, that is why they will maintain that I am sinful. Well, now if you who are so well versed in matters of the sort entertain the same beliefs, then, necessarily, it would seem, I must give in, for what could we urge who admit that, for our part, we are quite ignorant about these

[44] By insisting on the justice of his supposedly pious action, he gives a hint of the Socratic hypothesis that the virtues, at least, imply one another.

matters? But in the name of friendship, tell me. Do you actually believe that these things so happened? (6a-b)[45]

Euthyphro takes the traditional belief in communal responsibility for certain offences committed by any of its members against the gods very seriously. And he fears the communal and social pollution which inevitably results from a failure to punish such offences whoever was responsible. He thinks that divine justice requires punishment of the wrongdoer, which entails that failure to undertake to punish is impious. While he expects this to be common knowledge to his fellow citizens who are imbued with the Homeric "theology", these same people are accusing him of intending to engage in an impious act by prosecuting his father. Euthyphro accuses them of inconsistency (6a). Although Socrates' reply does not show that he does not believe in gods, it tells us in fairly clear terms that he belongs to the tradition of rational criticism of the gods of popular religion, and that it is this habitual critical attitude to the gods, which is at the root of the charges brought against him. Accordingly, his frequent references to gods in his defence against impiety requires a more critical understanding than is suggested on face value.

However that may be, Socrates' question quoted earlier, was inclusively disjointed into a primary but vague question, What is the pious? and a secondary question of increasing specification of

[45] In the *Cratylus* (400d), however, Socrates makes a somewhat stronger statement: 'There is one excellent principle which, as men of sense, we must acknowledge - that of the gods we know nothing, either of their natures or of the names which they give themselves'. This is consistent with the conclusions of this chapter if, i.e., we understand by "gods" gods as traditionally conceived.

"the pious" as "itself by itself", "the same *in* all pious actions" and "a single form". Three conceptual points are worth making here. First, the term - *idea* (5d, 6e) - is traditionally translated for Socrates as "form" or "character",[46] its other synonym, *eidos* (characteristic), is equivalent in meaning to a thing's essence (*ousia*), as opposed to its affection (*pathos*, 11a). Secondly, in saying that "the pious is the same *in* all pious actions", Socrates, confirmed by Aristotle,[47] locates "forms" firmly *in* but not, as in Plato's middle period dialogues, beyond sensible objects.[48] Accordingly, I shall use "form" with a small "f" and "Form" with capital "F" respectively to denote the difference between Socratic forms and Platonic *meta*physical Forms. Thirdly, the Greek expression "the pious" is a substantivised adjective. It is ambiguously either (i) a singular referring noun or (ii) a generic noun or (iii) an abstract noun. (i) assumes the existence of some singular existing thing called *the pious*. (ii) stands for the class or collection of pious actions or persons or any pious person or action. This is excluded from the primary question, what is the pious? as subsequently specified. (iii), which means the idea or attribute of piety is not meant by the primary question. The choice for (i) is therefore strong. Traditionally, "pious" and "impious" are relational terms used to describe a person's attitude or other relation to the gods. In substantivizing the adjective, *pious*, Socrates is conceiving it not as an attribute or as a

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46 I shall use *idea* to imply both these meanings. In Plato, abstract equivalences of *eidos* occur; e.g., *genos* is occasionally used to mean "class", "race", etc., and these run side by side with the metaphysical/ontological sense of *idea*.

47 *Meta.* 1078b30-2

48 See for example, *La.* 191e

relational predicate or as an idea existing in our minds, but as an objective reality existing distinctly from the actions or things which manifest it. For he explicitly distinguishes the form of a pious action from the action, and indicates this by specifying *the pious* as "itself by itself", "the same *in* every action", and "having one form"[49]. This string of specifications occurring in one long question reduces the ambiguity of "the pious" by disqualifying the candidature of (ii) and (iii); for that which is "itself by itself" *and* "the same *in* all pious actions" is neither a particular pious person nor an action, a class of such persons, actions nor actions of a sort. Neither is it an idea existing in the mind nor an attribute whose existence depends on particulars. Thus Socrates was right, I think, to take Euthyphro to have got him wrong, and to remind him about the specified meaning of the pious:

> Call to mind that this is not what I asked you; to tell me one or two of many pious acts, but to tell me the form itself *by which* all pious actions are pious; for you agreed that it is *by* one form that impious actions are impious and pious actions are pious (6d-e).

Here, as earlier, some single form *in* all pious actions is being distinguished as "the pious itself by itself" apart from particular pious actions which manifest it. The invocation of the formula

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[49] 'The progress of dialectic involves a passage from the respondent's naive existence assumption that "there is such a thing as "piety" to his acceptance, if dialectics is successful, of the highly sophisticated assumption that there is an essence of piety, and that it can be defined. But if the latter is true, the passage is continuous: for the commitment to essence is then latent in our ordinary use of words. The essence of piety is what the word "piety" means; to the degree that we do not understand that essence, we do not understand the meaning of our words.' Allen, op. cit. p. 110.

"itself by itself" implies that the pious is a pure, unmixed form-type which exists in a certain complexity to be disentangled. Euthyphro, it seems, is invited to isolate, definitionally, the pious *itself by itself* from any encumbrance.[50] Unfortunately, Socrates does not explain the formula. However, given that in the dialogues he persistently rejects behavioural accounts of virtue, and insists dialectically that we look beyond the appearance or the affections to their nature and cause, he is implying that the pious as a psychic-form - given that virtue is a state of the soul, and piety is a virtue - is distinct from, and is not entirely reducible to, its bodily manifestation.

There is a further specification in the above quotation. In addition to the apparently immanental "in" (*en pasei praxei*) at 5d, where particular pious acts are also said to *have* (*echon*) a single form, we have here also a causal or instrumental dative *hoi* - which I translate "by which". This strengthens a causal interpretation of forms. It also suggests that Socrates is interested in principles which *causally* determine and *explain* moral/religious behaviour. Were he interested in explanatory principles of non-ethical things too, he would have researched into the single form *by which* bees are bees as such (*Meno* 72bff.).

Given the causal *reality* of form and its specification as "itself by itself", the original question, What is the pious? demands that the interlocutor articulate a linguistic structure adequately

[50] This is not an unimportant point; for Euthyphro's main attempt to answer the Socratic question failed, at least partly, on the ground that he adduced a behavioural example in answer, whereas the pious is supposed to be that *by which* pious actions are pious. To call a form "one" (*mia*) and "itself by itself" is not to say that it is a bare simplicity. Socrates, I believe, is counting the qualitative identity of forms.

reflective of the pure and causal nature of the form. Obviously, such a linguistic structure cannot be a merely nominal equivalent of the pious. The primary question seems to demand a dialectically adequate *account* (*logos*) of the form as a cause. Since a form is *itself by itself*, this implies that, an adequate *logos* will *pick out* its qualitative purity from what lies outside it. Consequently, the *logos* of a form must be criterial or paradigmatic: by having it we can identify, classify or otherwise diagnose or even predict actions that are or are to be pious and those that are or are to be impious. And so Socrates insists - in a further specification of the pious, that Euthyphro teach him

> what the form which is *the same as itself* is, so that [he] may look to it and use it as a paradigm (*paradeigmati*) which, should those things which you or someone may do be of that sort, [he] may affirm that they are pious but should they not be of that sort, deny it (6e).[51]

The language of 6e, that (i) a form may be looked to and used as (ii) a paradigm, suggests the possibility of a visual or even a tactile acquaintanceship with an *idea*. But this is an incidence of the root of the term *idea* *-id* or *ei-* which is the same for the verb of seeing and knowing. However, the passage intimates that Socratic dialectics is not just a semantic business; its basic orientation is practical, concerned with how we must get on in this world. To "look to and use a form as a paradigm" is more than an epistemic metaphor employed analogically on two limbs. First, it implies that we possess the ability to express a paradigmatic *logos* [of a virtue-form] when we claim, like Euthyphro, to know

51 Cf. *Meno* 72c

what a virtue is. Secondly, given the close association of being and knowing, this ability to express a *logos* - which amounts to knowledge - already presupposes an *aretē*-soul, i.e., a divine or optimum state of the soul. Consequently, it will not be inaccurate to say that the *logos*-paradigm corresponds to "psychic-paradigm" as its objective cause.[52] The former is the propositional or verbal aspect of the latter as an objective reality.

The Socratic man is an agent- rather than act- centred *agathos*. The Homeric or traditional man needs only point to his socially approved actions as sufficient justification of his claims to *aretē*. For the Socratic man an action *per se* is not sufficient; an action cannot justify itself. A claim to *aretē* is to be justified intellectually. Thus at *Ch.* 158c7-159a10, Socrates says that if temperance *is present to* Charmides, it must give some intimation of its nature and qualities which may enable him to formulate a notion of it which he can express. At *La.*190c, it is said that if we know the nature of *aretē* we must surely be able to tell, so that Nicias' inability to account for courage cast doubt on his own courage. And in general, if one *is* virtuous one *knows* virtue, and if one knows virtue, one must be capable of expressing a *logos* of virtue; and this is the mark of a true *sophos*. Thus, if Euthyphro *is* truly wise in religious matters, if, i.e., he *is* truly pious as he claims, his pointing to his impending suit against his own father is not sufficient ground for piety, even though his action has divine precedent to boot. To prove that he is truly

[52] In the same sense in which *the hot* element causes heat in things, according to Greek science, such that heat characterises the nature of its cause. This does not entail a self-predicating thesis; an action is pious but only derivatively, in the sense that it bears the character of a pious soul, which is primarily what the *pious* is in itself.

pious, he would have to support his action with a *logos*-paradigm, i.e., a functionally criterial *logos* which is explicatory, justificatory, and predictive of pious actions. Such a *logos* must be dialectically irrefutable. Accordingly, if Euthyphro cracks under the *elenchus* and is unable to express a *logos*, not only will this imply that he will often mislead and misinform his clientele - since he would not know what he is a professor of - but also it will imply that he is not truly religious, contrary to his own self-belief and to public self-understanding[53]. So here is a different conception of religion according to which to be truly pious is to be in a divine or optimum state of soul, and this entails the ability to express, on demand, a dialectically adequate *logos* with which to justify your beliefs, and to guide your own and others' lives. This is the demand Socrates is making of Euthyphro, the religious expert, the seer, who also claims to be pious. Can he satisfy Socrates by offering a paradigm-*logos* of piety? He makes the attempt:

> The god-loved (*to theophiles*) is pious, and the god-hated (*to theomisēs*) is impious (6e-7a).

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[53] The necessity of previous knowledge of the nature of the pious for a successful career in the identification of its manifestations is not supposed to mean that ordinarily, people are unable to identify these. But the conflict as to whether Euthyphro's claim to piety based as it is on divine precedent is true, shows that conventional usages are not a sure guide to resolve difficult cases, and even what may look like easy cases may, on dialectical prognosis, cause a lot of difficulties. Socratic dialectics aims at directing minds from shifting conventional and subjective standards, to unchanging, and universal standards of justice or beauty or piety, etc., knowledge of which is presumed sufficient for successful and justifiable identification of all instances of justice, beauty, piety, etc. cf. *H.Ma.* 286c-d.

This definition, consistent with Euthyphro's belief in the traditional anthropomorphic gods, has the semblance of a criterial proposition; it attempts to pick out something definite, "the god-loved". It is accepted provisionally to be examined for what it is worth. Two *reductios*[54] succeed against Euthyphro - respectively on the basis of his conception of gods,[55] and on a definitional analysis of "*to theophilès*" and "*to theomises*". The first is this; if the gods are as conceived by Euthyphro, anthropomorphic and quarrelsome, then, like us, they are wont to disagree most of all on matters of ethics and aesthetics, matters about which there are no ostensive[56] standards for settlement (7bff). The contradiction will be generated that the same thing would be both "god-loved" and "god-hated" (7eff.). For if the gods quarrel, Euthyphro may be sure that Zeus likes his action, but Hera may despise it. To avoid this conclusion, Euthyphro had to claim at least one of three things. The first is to say - what is traditionally believed - that the gods, unlike humans, have

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54 These are not demonstrative but dialectical arguments. They proceed from the respondent's own belief(s), which here includes the assumption that the pious = the god-loved (cf. *Meno* 75d), and the conclusion is drawn by analogy from premises established by (obvious) examples.

55 This premise is not made explicit in the language of the text, but only on its assumption is Socrates' response to Euthyphro intelligible.

56 I say "ostensive" because Socrates is far from claiming that there can be no standard - both of substance and procedure - to which moral and aesthetic unlike "factual" issues can be appealed in cases of dispute. Were he to imply this, the whole purpose of dialectics would be defeated, since Socratic dialectics proceeds on the assumption that there are such objective standards. He is here merely distinguishing the subject-matter - matter of value or worth - about which quarrelling and enmity arise and the situations in which they arise. In any case the heart of the matter goes deeper. Socrates is against any measure of truth which is volatile. And an explanation in terms of anthropomorphic whims and predilections seems to suggest such a measure.

superior knowledge, and to link this to the expectation that this superior knowledge enables them to settle questions of worth and value without quarrel.[57] For it appears that Euthyphro is appealing to the moral authority of the gods on the basis of their superior knowledge. Yet he cannot avail himself of this, since it is common knowledge that the gods quarrel. The precedent Euthyphro invokes to justify his own action is itself a testimony of the quarrelsomeness of the gods. For Socrates, however, to quarrel about questions of beauty, justice, and so on, presupposes lack of true wisdom about these. Hence, if there are gods, they cannot be the ones envisaged by Euthyphro or traditional religion, given that true wisdom is the property of god. The second way out for Euthyphro is to heed Xenophanes' call to abandon the anthropomorphic conception of the gods. But Euthyphro's own definition would have collapsed, since it depended on such a conception. Thirdly, he can claim that there is exactly one god, so that the question of quarreling does not arise. This, too, he cannot claim since his concept of the pious was inspired by the relation of, at least, two gods. Also, the existence of one and only one god may not in itself be sufficient, if that god lacks true wisdom.

At any rate, neither of those expedients would save Euthyphro. But he does not realise it. Rather he confidently invokes a common belief in the moral principle that everybody, with all the gods, agrees that he who has done wrong ought to be punished. His father has done wrong, he seems to argue. Therefore, his

[57] How often Zeus, the king of gods, is easily duped and seduced by his wife Hera, and at times found to be quite ignorant of what is going on around him, is just part of the numerous inconsistencies in the traditional beliefs about the gods as agents far superior in many ways - including knowledge - to human agents.

father ought to be punished. Socrates points out, that real disagreement among men or (anthropomorphic) gods concerns *not* the universal, moral principle - that the wrongdoer must be punished - but what circumstances provide a valid case under this principle (8d). Euthyphro, however, cannot - on request - prove that the circumstances which his father set in motion and which led to the death of his labourer are impious and that his intending action is a case subsumable under this moral principle. Whatever the worth of that principle, Socrates is prepared to grant, for the sake of argument, what Euthyphro cannot prove: let your father's conduct be wrong, and let *all* the gods hate it and declare it impious (9c-d). Still, the question remains; What is the pious? Euthyphro's amended definition reads:

> the pious is what *all* the gods love, and the impious, what *all* the gods hate (9e).

This offers a new ground for the second *reductio*, which is also the central argument in the *Euthyphro*. The argument is prompted by this question: Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious or is it pious because it is loved by the gods? (10a) Euthyphro does not understand this question which has the logical form; Is it p because q or q because p? Socrates promises to speak more clearly (10a). He adduces a series of parallel cases which has the form "p because q but not q because p", and then concludes that the pious is not the same as the god-loved. Since the refutation of Euthyphro turns on answers to the question - Is it p because q or q because p? - we might ask why Socrates thought that that question was relevant to the search for the nature of the pious. This preliminary question is all the more

important because the rule of inference from the premises to the conclusion is unexpressed.

As we have seen, Socratic dialectics supposes that *the pious*, as an objective state of the soul, is a cause of all pious actions and the source of a dialectically adequate *logos* which functions epistemically as a criterion *enabling* us successfully to pick out, classify, justify, and predict *all* instances of piety and impiety. Minimally, then, a dialectically adequate *logos* must reflect three conditions of the form: its (i) universality (ii) objectivity, and (iii) causality. This is already intimated in the thesis that "an action is pious *because* of *the pious*", where "because" is causal, and implies the objective reality of the substantive "*the pious*", whose universality lies in the fact that it is *in all pious actions*. In thus asking the question: (A) Is that which is pious loved by the gods *because* it is pious *or* (B) Is it pious *because* it is loved by the gods? it is being asked whether to be pious *causally depends* (A) on *the* pious[58] or (B) on the love of the gods. Opting for (A) would entail that the act of loving is caused by, i.e., is consequent to some intrinsically pious, and objectively existing thing called *the pious*. (B) would mean that the act of loving causes something to be pious. (A) and (B) are formally inconsistent, indeed, incompatible. By agreeing to (A) and (B) Euthyphro was torn between the demands of dialectics and his traditional religious sensibility. Given his belief in the gods as traditionally conceived, piety would be nothing unless it somehow relates to

[58] The definite article is missing here but the point is clear. The question is whether an action's being pious depends on, i.e., is caused by its intrinsic worth or on an external evaluation. It turns out that the act of evaluation depends on something prior to it, and is thus caused in turn.

the gods' predilections. However, the dialectical thesis in operation is that all behaviours, walking, attitudes, preferences, whether they come from man or gods anthropomorphically conceived - are psychically caused and reflect the state or character of the soul. Euthyphro's unwitting acceptance of both (A) and (B) prepares the ground for the falsification of *his* "logos".

The foregoing preview gives us some perspective on the relevance of the question at 10a - is it p because q or q because p? its connection with Euthyphro's *logos*, and the continuity of the argument in the dialogue. The argument to refute Euthyphro is as follows. If anything is being carried, it is a carried thing *because* of the carrying; but it is not being carried because it is a carried thing. Similarly with "being led", "being seen" (10a-b). It is then said that "being loved" belongs to this class (10c). All this implies that in general, any affection or attribute - all expressed in the phrase "being....", *depends on* the prior existence of an objective reality. In context, the obvious implication for Euthyphro's equation of "the pious" with "the god-loved" is that since "god-loved" is a "being..." thing, i.e., an affection, it *causally depends* on the gods' loving attitude to it - to the extent that "the god-loved" would not exist if the gods did not love it, just as "being carried" would not exist if there were no carrying.[59] This is inconsistent with the dialectical requirement (i) - (iii) above, viz., that that "the pious" be an objectively existing universal

[59] The argument leading to the summary at 10c: 'If something is coming to be or something is affected in a certain way, it is not because it is a thing which is coming to be that the process of coming to be exists, but because of the process of coming to be, it is a thing which is coming to be; it is not because it is affected that the affecting exists, but because of the affecting, the thing is affected'.

cause.[60] By unwittingly accepting that it is by the pious that all actions are pious, and that to be pious is to be loved by the gods[61] Euthyphro paves the way for his own refutation which Socrates summarises with a touch of irony at 11a:

> ...the two are completely different. For the one [the god-loved] is of the sort to be loved *because it is loved*; the other [the pious], *because it is of the sort to be loved*, therefore is loved. It would seem, Euthyphro, that when you were asked what the pious is, you did not mean to make its essence (*ousia*) clear to me; you mentioned some mere affection (*pathos ti*) of it. The holy has been so affected as to be loved by all the gods. What it really is, you have not said.

So far, then, we may tentatively conclude that, if there are gods, piety would not be determined by what they love, since their love would be logically subsequent to the form of piety. But this may in turn suggest that forms in general must be prior to gods, and that it is insofar as the form of piety exists in the first place that there is a pious attitude, preference, or behaviour (whether of god

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60 Some scholars have proceeded to the analysis of the argument as if it centred on (1) a Leibnizian principle of Substitution according to which two expressions for the same thing must be mutually replaceable *salva veritate*.- Geach (1966), (2) the principle of the substitutivity of definitional equivalents - Cohen (1971) or (3) a pair of principles - transitivity and causality - Sharvy (1972). That the argument *may* involve some principle of substitutivity or transitivity and causality is not denied. But these principles do not explain why Socrates may have resorted to them, if he resorted to them. For these principles have no obvious connection to the arguments in the text as a whole. On my account the whole argument is held together by a more unifying dialectical thesis, viz., the dialectical conception of *the pious* and its implications for Euthyphro's definition.

61 The definite article is missing here but the point is clear. The question is whether an action's being pious depends on, i.e., is caused by its intrinsic worth or on an external valuation. It turns out that the act of valuation is in turn caused.

or men), but not vice versa. But if piety is a kind of *sophia*, which is an optimum and divine state of the soul, this would imply that for Socrates, the fundamental grounds of religion are divine forms. It also implies that true religion does not depend on external or accidental relations of attitudes, attributes or sacrifices. Thus there may well be gods, but they would not be the gods as traditionally conceived. This conclusion underpins the subsequent discussion of what it means to worship, care for (*therapeia*, 12eff.), or serve (*hupēretikē*, 13d) god.

Socrates suggests to Euthyphro that the form of the pious may be understood as a part (*meros*) or a specific difference of the larger form called the just. Euthyphro, takes up the suggestion, and defines the pious as the part of the just concerned with attendance (*therapeia*) to the gods, and the remaining part of the just is concerned with attendance to men (12e).[62] For Socrates, however, attendance or service aims either at benefitting or making better the subject-matter of attendance *or* at aiding in the production of something (13bff.). Euthyphro, who must know that traditionally gods are thought to be self-sufficient, cannot conclude that religious attendances or services benefit and make the gods better. But nor can he figure out what service to god is productive of. Euthyphro now defines the pious as *epistēmē* (14b) or an art (*technē*, 14e) of gratifying the gods in praying and sacrificing, the opposite of what is gratifying to the gods is the impious (14b).

At this point Socrates says that Euthyphro has come right up to the point of answering his question and then turned away (14c). This may refer to two possibilities. Socrates, with appropriate

[62] Cf. *Cr.* 54b, *La.* 199d, *Prt.* 330c-331e, *G.* 507a-b

adjustment to what he means by "god" and reference to the *Apology*, may believe that true religious service is in aid of producing virtue in our souls, as Vlastos (1991) holds. But this should be understood to mean that god, as the perfect exemplification of virtue-wisdom, is that by which we measure the production of virtue in us. The other possibility may be that by referring to service of god as *epistēmē* (or *technē*) of prayers and sacrifices, Euthyphro came close to the realisation that piety is agent-centred, a kind of wisdom, a state of the soul. He failed in the full realisation because he still has an act-centred approach to religion; he connected *epistēmē* and *technē* with prayers and sacrifices. Both possibilities are compatible, but if Socrates does not mean both it is not clear which he has in mind. Let us go back to the text.

Now to sacrifice means to give to the gods; to pray means to ask from the gods. But we will hesitate to give to the gods unless they really need what we give, and they will give just what we rightly need. So that it would be right asking and right taking that would be involved here, if worship is to be a *technē* or *epistēmē* (14e).[63] Although, everything good that is ours comes from the gods (14e-15a), and although the traditional conception of worship is a "give-and-take" between men and gods, Euthyphro cannot see what sort of advantages (*ōphelima*) the gods derive from such commercial (*emporikē*) conception of worship of or service to gods. He now suggests honour and praise - things

[63] If *right* asking and *right* giving go into true worship, the qualification of *rightness* may, after all, make the content of asking and giving something entirely different from that entertained in traditional religion. Cf. the highly philosophical prayer for personal goodness and harmony attributed to Socrates at *Phaedrus*.

suggesting gratitude (15a). But what is grateful is not (necessarily) god-loved, Socrates points out. "It is god-loved", replies Euthyphro. Euthyphro has come full circle (15a) to the definition rejected earlier, namely, that the pious is god-loved.

5 Summary

The stage has been set for a rational reduction of religion. Although the result of the dialectical discussion in *Euthyphro* is, as often, obviously negative, its positive implications are fairly discernible. From our discussions so far, we see that dialectics suggests the existence of permanent, objective and universal standards of truth and value as opposed to opinions[64] and social conventions in religious or moral matters. Religious and moral attitudes, attributes, or actions are a function of our real self, our soul. True religion, true piety, is to be grounded in the optimum state of our soul Such a state of soul is commensurate with *the good* of life, which is what we all want and want for its sake. Theological voluntarism - the view that whatever is good, pious, etc., is so because god wills it, and the subjectivist accounts of ethics which define goodness, etc. in terms of approval, are here firmly rejected in favour of the objectivity of goodness or piety as psychically realisable formal conditions. The traditional conception of gods entails absurdities in the practice and theory of worship of or service to gods. True worship or service to god is a project of perfecting one's soul or of helping to perfect others' soul - which was the end of Socratic *philosophia* by dialectics.

Traditional Greek religion was largely a matter of things done -

[64] Beliefs may desert a man under scrutiny - cf. *Euthy.* 11b6-e1; *La* 194b; *R.* 334b - but knowledge (of form) is stable.

ritual observance, and hardly a matter of how the individual felt or thought. Religious standards were thus largely ritual observance, with little supporting creed or dogma. From Thales on, the Presocratics brought religion to the bar of reason, by transposing mythological cosmologies to systematic philosophical accounts of the world - accounts in which god appears as the constant determining principle of the movements, order and consciousness in this world. Socrates has been concerned with how we should live the best possible life. But this necessarily involves a certain conception of what the world really is. Dialectics points to forms as the fundamental realities which underlie the structure of the world, and virtue-forms constitute the principles in terms of which truth, religion, virtue, or happiness in their true and highest sense are to be defined. Knowledge of form is true wisdom, but to be truly wise is the key characteristic of god. Thus the forms set the conditions for the divinity of ensouled beings (man or god). The existence of forms, like the Presocratic divine *archai*, is necessary as that which is ultimately presupposed in an account of a feature of the cosmos, viz., the moral-religious phenomena. God, for Socrates as for his predecessors, is associated with first principles. But while the Presocratics did not generally moralise their *archē*-god, one of Socrates' distinctive contribution to Greek thought is his ethical grounding of religion or theology. Since moral forms set the conditions for divinity, God, as the truly wise being, is for Socrates the being who fulfils the optimum condition of rational and ethical excellence, i.e., one who embodies the virtue-forms. This retains the traditional conception of god as an ideal embodiment of the

(competitive) virtues. But it does so by removing, what traditional religion accommodated, every trace of subjective arbitrariness, ignorance, and moral perversion from the notion and being of god. God must be morally and intellectually perfect.

In Greek orthodox religion, it is impious to strive for divine excellence. For Socrates, piety is no longer the simple, uncritical and submissive reverence to the gods accepted by the community. True piety is wisdom, it is an optimum state of the soul; derivatively, it consists in *philo-sophia*, i.e., activity dedicated to the perfection of one's or others' soul. True religion would then be philosophical activity conceived and organised towards the realisation of one's rational and ethical perfection. In other words religion is, as Socrates implies in the *Apology*, *philo-sophia*. *Philo-sophia* is our divine duty and service to god, but it is also the best policy; for "no man really knows what happens at death" (*Ap* 29a-b). And, at any rate, the fundamental essences of things are commensurable with *the good* of life, to the extent that the good man suffers no evil either while he lives or when he is dead.

The distinctive feature of our next chapter is the explicit cosmic application of Socratic religion in Plato's middle and late dialogues. The real difference is the metaphysical status of soul and Forms *and* all that this entails. The metaphysics of this philosophical religion is motivated by the explanatory power underlying the Orphic-pythagorean conception of the substantial separability of soul from body, of the former's possible immortality and non-earthly destiny. It is the conceived implicit truth of these elements in the popular religion which Plato, like Socrates, has appropriated and fulfilled on a higher level as the true religion.

CHAPTER 4

PLATO'S THEOLOGY

1 A synopsis

The previous chapter tends to the argument that true religion is activity in pursuit or love of *sophia*. But *sophia* is the key characteristic of god. Yet, according to Socrates, the function of human life is to attain *sophia* which is *the good*. *Sophia* simply is an optimum state of the soul attainable by knowledge of ethical first principles - principles of divine wisdom and happiness, of the highest values and excellent action. Thus, being divinely happy, wise and good implies the prior existence of the forms which dialectics leads to. According to the Socratic dialogues, Socrates is not committed to an after-life. But in a culture now dominated by the religion of initiation, ecstatic *katharsis*, and other forms of ritual as rites of passage to spiritual salvation, happiness, and the blessed after-life, the function of forms implied in Socratic dialectics entails a new kind of religion. It is this new religion, applied to the conception of a soul with non-earthly destiny and substantially separable from a body, which we find fully blown out in most post-Socratic dialogues. Accordingly, Plato's philosophy of religion is built upon three basic factors; Forms, soul and body. It is the soul's relation between Forms and body which defines both the content and structure of Plato's philosophy of religion in the post-Socratic dialogues.

In talking of Plato's philosophy of religion two qualifications are necessary. First, I am aware that what is called Plato's philosophy of religion is not completely and coherently presented in a single

Platonic dialogue. Plato usually pursues different purposes in different dialogues. Yet, a more or less coherent picture of Platonic religion is visible in the post-Socratic dialogues. Secondly, in talking about Plato's philosophy of religion, I am not implying that Plato has a unitarian conception, throughout the dialogues, of what I have identified as the three pillars of Platonic religion, viz., Forms, soul and body. Plato may not have developed the concept of tripartite soul of the *Republic* while writing, e.g., the *Meno* or *Phaedo*. He may not have developed the *Timaeus*' concept of the atomic structure of body in e.g., the *Republic* and *Phaedrus*. Again, the Platonic Forms as appear in the *Sophist* and *Philebus* may possibly be different from those of the *Phaedo* and *Republic*. Broadly, however, I acknowledge the traditional distinction between the Middle and Late dialogues, as I have distinguished these from the Early or Socratic dialogues. But *as far as Plato's philosophy of religion is concerned*, the possible conceptual developments of Forms, soul and body are most probably not sufficiently radical to warrant discontinuity of the basic meanings of these terms throughout that development. Consequently, I think that "Plato's philosophy of religion" is a textually warrantable designation of an aspect of Plato's thought. Accordingly, although I shall distinguish between the Middle and Late dialogues, it shall be clear that the distinction does not affect the basic meaning and continuity of what I believe to be Plato's thoughts on religion.

The basic framework of Plato's philosophy of religion is as follows. First, there is the "realm" of Forms. Forms are causally effective paradigmatic principles of truth, goodness and happiness, and the intelligibility and essences of phenomena.[1]

[1] That forms are paradigms was intimated in the *Euthyphro* and, apart

Forms are divine, and their divinity is implicitly linked both with their causal function and with the paradigmatic conditions of their existence: uniqueness, invariance, uniformity, incompositeness, invisibility, eternality, and logical self-sufficiency (i.e., they do not depend on anything else for their existence or nature). The Forms constitute a system permeated by the universal Form of the Good. The Good is not merely a *dunamis* (a power), and an *aitia* (a cause/reason) - emphasis on its causal efficacy - but also that which holds all things together for the best (*Phdo.* 99c.); it also makes all other Forms intelligible in the way that the sun makes phenomenal objects intelligible (*R.* 506e3-4, 508b-509b, 517c). In this the Good serves as the ultimate hypothesis in a scientific account of the universe[2] conceived as a cosmos. As the *Phaedo* (99bff.) and *Timaeus* show, Plato thinks that a scientifically adequate account must be a teleological one of the purposive kind based on the postulation of Forms. In the *Timaeus*, the Good appears as the Form of animal; the cosmos is said to be good and beautiful as a visible image of the Form of animal copied out by God as a divine Craftsman (Demiurge).[3]

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from its being specifically so characterised in the *Timaeus*, Forms are usually in Plato the realities which phenomena strive for but fall short. In the late dialogues "measure" (*metron*) and its Platonic equivalence "limit" (*peras*) tend to replace paradigm as the primary designation for the aspect of Forms as exemplars. In technical passages in these late dialogues, "paradigm" often means "parallel case" rather than exemplar (*St.* 278e). That Forms (of virtue) are principles of happiness, goodness, etc., is at least implied in Socratic dialectics, and is clearly the case in the middle period, as we shall see.

2 *Phdo*, 100c10-d7, 101d-e1; cf. *R.* 526e, 527e, 533b.

3 In this essay, I shall, without argument for lack of space, take Demiurgic creation as an argument to the conclusion, that if anything is subject to an intelligible explanation, it satisfies the requirements of creation, not in the sense that the thing in question has been brought into existence from empty nothingness, but in the sense that the thing

At the opposite end to the nature of Forms is the nature of body which constitutes either the principle of or condition for visibility, variability, contingency, evil, non-rationality and temporality.[4] Next in "hierarchy" to the "realm" of Forms is the astronomical sphere, "the abode of the gods" - the innumerable stars and planets. Gods are souls everlastingly united with their bodies over which they have perfect rule. Gods are divinely happy, wise, good, blessed, just, caring, and in absolute control of their bodies but in virtue of their being imbued with Forms. This is put succinctly in the *Symposium*: 'none of the gods are seekers of truth. They do not long for *sophia* because they are wise'. And, of course, in Plato, to be divinely wise is to be imbued with Forms. Alternatively, the *Phaedrus* presents the same doctrine in a mythical *logos*: the gods "feast on", "have a vision of" "are nourished by" "contemplate" Forms (*Phdr.* 247). But being imbued with Forms entails that gods do honest work in the universe - that of conducting the celestial revolutions through which they transmit justice, care, goodness, and those standard-establishing conditions of Forms that are capable of being received more or less by bodily nature - viz., uniqueness, invariability, uniformity, and eternality. But also by being imbued with Forms the life of god constitutes the standard life for all other souls. Human beings are souls ephemerally united with a body over which they have no absolute rule. The *Timaeus* and *Epinomis* explain the nature of the body of the gods as fiery or predominantly fiery, and that of humans as earthly or

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can be accounted for *as if* a creative mind had planned and executed it.

[4] *Phdo.* 78c6-9; 79a1-11; 78c1-3; 78c10-d; 79a; 79c-d; 65a-c; 80d5; *Ti.* 28c-29

predominantly earthy.

The function of *human* life is to "join the company of gods", i.e., to be imbued with or know Forms, which amounts to being truly virtuous or *sophos*. Hence, Platonic religion is the system of activities undertaken in love of *sophia* or, alternatively, the system of activities that facilitate the rule of reason in us as embodied souls. This implies that the activities involved must lead the soul to the apprehension of Forms, which in turn implies a move away from the influence or conditions of bodily existence. Accordingly, the moral dimension of Platonic religion - viz., that we *ought* to know Forms, is grounded on the intellectual. For access to Forms is *primarily* by way of dialectical *logoi*, activities that inure the soul to *a priori* thinking, away from the sensible and the sensual, towards a sublime vision of the Form of Good. Not surprisingly, Plato's religious devotees are first and foremost, philosophers, in his sense. Nevertheless, for the majority of ordinary people incapable of the direct and ascetically intellectualist ascent to Forms, a degree of acceptable piety will avail them if they contribute, in a social or political community, to the rule of highly rational beings who have either apprehended Forms or are truly devoted to the love of *sophia*. A failure to pursue the moral injunction to know Forms has earthly and eschatological consequences; we shall never approximate true happiness or true justice while we live, and when we are dead, i.e., when our soul is separated from our body, the soul shall be incarnated into other lower forms of bodily life. This, in a nutshell, is Platonic religion.

However, there are two successive trends in Plato's philosophy

of religion. The first is characteristic of the middle period dialogues - *Phaedo, Republic, Phaedrus and Symposium.* Although gods are mentioned in these dialogues, their role in Plato's philosophical-religious scheme is not emphasised. The main feature of Platonic religiosity is presented as if it consists in the *direct* "contemplation" of Forms by the human soul. Let us call this the "contemplative" approach to religion. This is first intimated in the *Meno* with *Phaedo*. The *Republic* represents its fullest development in a curriculum of abstract studies - arithmetic, geometry, astromony, harmonics - intended to acustom the mind of a "devotee" to *a priori* reasoning, which will culminate through philosophical dialectic in the sublime vision of the Good. Plato constantly contrasts "devotees" of this religion as lovers of wisdom, of beauty itself with the lovers of sight, physical beauty or sensuality.[5] But in the late dialogues - *Sophist, Philebus, Statesman, Laws, Timaeus, Epinomis*[6] - a new emphasis, first intimated in the *Phaedrus*, appears. The cosmological passages of these dialogues seem to demonstrate the rule of divine Reason in the cosmos as a whole. Plato does so by describing Reason in the cosmos as Soul,[7] defined as "motion of Reason" (*nou kinēsis, Laws*, 897d). Reason is imbued with ("has a view to" *Ti.* 29a) Forms. Alternatively, since Soul is Reason in motion, then, insofar as Reason is imbued with Forms, Soul can be

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5 *Phdo.* 64e, 68c; *R.* 476a; *Phdr.* 242bff.

6 It has been believed that it was, at least, largely written by Philippus of Opus, although the doctrine there presented appears to have been promised by the Stranger at the end of book 12, and it is, for all intents and purposes, a sequel to book 12. I shall so take it.

7 Henceforth, Soul (with capital "S") will alternatively distinguish cosmic or divine soul (of god) from human soul or soul generically speaking, which will be written just as "soul". Likewise, "Reason" will distinguish divine Reason (of God) from human or generic "reason".

poetically represented as having been constructed of the Forms of Being, Sameness and Difference (*Ti.* 34c-35). Here, the function of Forms is consistent with the eternal and constant homeostatic conditions of our organic, dynamic cosmos. The emphasis is on the philosophically restated roles traditionally associated with the gods: that of influencing events in this world by (impartially and inviolably) imparting justice to and caring for all things (through the celestial revolutions). Religion comes to consist in ordering our lives in accordance with the properties of order, uniformity and harmony which characterise the celestial movements. This new emphasis on movement, may well substantiate the *Epinomis*, whose author argues (991e) that astronomy is the supreme subject of study which leads to the truest wisdom, piety, and sure preservation of virtue. For it is in astronomy that we learn the rational convolutions in which the heavens declare the glory of god, and thereby bring our minds in conformity to the divine mind of the cosmos. Let us call the religiosity arising from this new emphasis on movement the "movement" approach to religion.

Is there a difference between the "contemplative" and "movement" approaches to religion? Yes and no. The difference, if any, is one of perspective. For Platonic philosophical-religious contemplation (*theōria*) means neither thoughtful consideration/observation nor, as in christian religion, spiritual meditation of the soul upon a separately existing God. Rather, it is activity of an entire quality of life signifying the highest self-fulfilment in which the essential nature of the soul has been brought, through long and arduous intellectual and ethical preparation, into commensuration with the fundamental,

intelligible and divine principles of reality. Such a life entails the ability to translate these intelligible principles into action, and/or being able to utter words which constitute a *logos* of things as they really are. From this point of view the two approaches to religion are the same. However, a difference in perspective exists; compared with the middle period, the late perspective emphasises the causal dynamics rather than statics of Forms. Also, the late perspective more than the middle period perspective corresponds to Plato's preparedness to accommodate a larger degree of pleasure in human virtue. The *Phaedo* (see 81b) emphasises the moral duty to avoid, *as far as possible*, association with *any* bodily affection for the sake of philosophical wisdom. But in the *Philebus*, to the question whether any of us would be content with a life in which he possessed wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and a complete memory of the whole of history but experienced no pleasure, pain - great or small - the answer is an emphatic No (21d-e). The life of feeling has become for Plato a defining clause of human nature. In the *Laws* we are told that 'no one would consent, if he could help it, to a course of action which would not bring him more joy than sorrow' (663b Cf. 733a). And at 733a, it is said that nothing is so native to human life as pleasure, pain and desire. Generally, the *Laws* shows that the late perspective may accommodate more open, less intellectualist activities when Plato implies there that any activity - drinking, dancing, music, other festivities, legislation or obedience to a genuine kind of legislation - is an acceptable degree of religious piety, provided it meets the criteria by which such activities may imitate, or in any degree produce an imitation

of, the rule of divine Reason in the cosmos, a rule which is identical with the patterns of celestial movement.

In what follows, I shall, for the purposes of exposition, refer to the middle period emphasis on the *direct* "contemplation" of Forms as the "contemplative" approach to religion, and the late period emphasis on movement as the "movement" approach to religion. The fundamental identity of the two approaches has many elements, at least two of which are that (a) the basic logic of Plato's religion is based on traditional Olympian deism and orphic-pythagoreanism; this is linked to (b) the conception of religion as fundamentally having to do with the function of life, understood to be the attainment of *the good* which is interpreted as *sophia*. Both approaches may be viewed as successive ways of defining "true" religion as activity in pursuit or love of *sophia*. The "contemplative" approach implies but does not emphasise the "movement" approach. Incidentally both approaches attempt to face the tasks not addressed in the Socratic dialogues, viz., a description of the (ia) nature of and (ib) relation between soul and forms - where (ib) includes the mode and (ii) the means whereby soul acquires access to forms. Accordingly, the following essay is divided into 5 sections. Counting the present section, the next section, 2, states the "contemplative" approach; 3 states the "movement" approach. How far Plato intends *his* religion to be an adequate substitution of traditional religion is suggested by the fact that he presents these approaches in conjunction with the sensitive but all-important themes of divine providence and justice, the issue of evil, and eschatology - the presentation being done in the full flower of mythical and mystical verbiage associated with the Olympian and mystery religions. Accordingly,

section 4 attempts to deal with these themes. Section 5 (a) and (b) deal with education by dialectics and legislation as the two principal but complementary means to Platonic religiosity. The final section, 6, summarises the results of the discussions.

2 The contemplative approach to religion

In the *Phaedrus* (242b8-257a) and *Symposium* (200e-212a), Socrates' mythical speeches about *Erōs* (Love, Desire) culminate the middle period approach, and contain intimations of the late. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates' second speech was intended to supplement his first speech which had treated *Erōs* as a blind, irrational force that works in opposition to reason, a sort of madness associated with the desire for pleasure and sensual gratification. He recognises that *Erōs* is either a god or a divine thing (242e2). But god or the divine cannot be an evil thing. Nor is madness invariably evil. According to Socrates, the greatest blessings of mankind - oracular truth, prophecy, poetic creation - come in the form of divine madness or possession (244a-b).[8] These madnesses inspire to truer results than is otherwise the case in ordinary sanity (245c). Divine madness is a gift of the gods fraught with the highest bliss. To prove this requires discernment of the nature of soul, both divine and human, its experiences and activities (245c). This is presented in three roughly distinct parts: Part (I) deals in general terms with both divine and human soul; (II) deals with the soul of gods, its

[8] There is, to be sure, some irony in this passage, since in the same dialogue as elsewhere, Plato ranks the prophet, seer and the like far below the true *sophos* (248c-e). Plato's main point here is that *Erōs* has a metaphysical status and dimension.

experiences and activities; (lll) returns to the human soul, its experiences and activities. I will present (lll) in connection with the *Symposium* and other texts in section 4.

(l) From *Phdr.* 245c to 246a, Plato argues that the soul is immortal because it is essentially self-moving.[9] A self-mover is an *archē*, a first principle. This entails that it is itself ungenerable and imperishable. As an *archē*, soul is the source of all other movements (*kinēseis*) and becomings (*to gignomenon*). Soul traverses the whole universe in ever-changing forms (246b-d), we are told. At least, part of its function is to care for all that is inanimate. All self-moving beings are ensouled. Soul has a constitutive nature which can be told only poetically, i.e., by analogy: soul is like a union of *powers* in a team of winged steeds and their winged charioteer. All the gods' steeds and their charioteer are good, but not so with other beings. Among mankind, it is a pair of steeds, one noble and good, the other ignoble and bad, which the charioteer controls (246a-b). At 253c8-e, the three parts of the soul are explicated with reference to what they are inclined to: the good steed is the lover of glory, but with temperance and modesty, and needs no whip; the other is hard to control, consorts with wantonness and vainglory; it is implied that the charioteer is inclined to *sophia*. The term "mortal" applies to a composite of soul and body; "immortal" to such a composite whose elements are in everlasting unity.

(ll) Next, the life of the divine soul, its activities and experiences. The mythical *logos* is interesting enough to be quoted here at some length:

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9 So Alcmaeon (Aristotle's *de An.* 405a29-b1) as noticed earlier in the chapter on the Presocratics

In the heavens, Zeus, the host of gods and other *daimones* orders and cares for all things... (246e). Within the heavens are many spectacles of bliss on the highways whereon the blessed gods pass to and fro, each doing his own work. But as such times as they go their feasting and banquet, they climb the steep ascent onto the summit of that arch that supports the heavens, and easy is that ascent for the chariot of the gods; for they are well balanced and readily guided... (247c). Of that place beyond the heavens where none of the earthly poets has yet sung ... we must be bold to tell what is true... It is there that true being dwells, without colour, shape, cannot be touched; reason alone can behold it, and all true knowledge is knowledge thereof. The thought of god, like every soul that has care to receive her proper food, is nourished by reason (*nōi*) and knowledge (*epistēmē*). Wherefore, when at last she has beheld being she is well content... And while she is borne round she discerns Justice itself, Temperance, and Knowledge. And when she has *contemplated* (*theasamenē*) likewise and feasted upon all else that has true being, she descends again within the heavens and comes back home. And having so come, the charioteer sets his steeds at their manger, and puts ambrosia before them and draught of nectar to drink withal (247e). Such is the life of gods. Of the other souls that which best follows a god and becomes most like thereunto raises her charioteers' head into the outer region, and is carried round with the gods in the revolution (248a).

There are a number of significant notes some of which will be taken up later in section 4. Presently, we may take the following notes. Plato is inclined to boldness to tell the truth which the inspired poets - Homer, Hesiod, etc., and generally, traditional religion, have missed. Part, at least, of this truth is that there is a place beyond the heavens where true being - intangible, shapeless, colourless, namely, Forms (Beauty, Justice, Temperance, etc. 247d6, 250b5) - dwell. That the Forms are "beyond the heavens" simply means they are immaterial realities. That the "place beyond heavens" is an intelligible plane of pure rationality,

beyond sensation or sensuality, is also the reason why '*reason alone* can behold it'. Since the gods of the heaven are ensouled bodies, it follows that they cannot dwell in the immaterial, intelligible "realm" of Forms. Yet, it is exactly there that they must feast and banquet. The reason is said to be because the soul of gods, like every other soul, must be nourished (i.e., informed) by knowledge and reason; and it is implied that only in relation to Forms are souls nourished. Note that Plato has boldly but wisely made Forms rather than ambrosia and nectar the primary and proper meal of the gods. It is only after the gods have fully feasted on Forms and returned to their sensible, sensual abode that the *charioteer* (the rational part) of their soul sets - what is not needed in reality - ambrosia and nectar before the steeds (the spirited and appetitive parts of their soul).

The souls of the gods have easy or ready access to Forms because the charioteer and steeds are in perfect balance. This is a poetic way of saying that the gods are imbued with Forms. The steeds are good and easily guided; they present no conflicting tendencies between themselves or each in relation to the charioteer. The gods return home, after a full feasting on or contemplation of Forms, to their task - that of conducting the heavenly revolutions, and through that of *ordering* and *caring* for all things (my reading of 247e, 246b, e). The point of the "spectacles of bliss" along the heavenly roads in addition to the final sublime vision in the region outside the heavens seems to be that the gods keep the Forms in view as they go about their celestial activity. Their actions are governed by a constant vision of the Forms. Because Forms are principles of knowledge, wisdom,

true happiness, truth, etc., Plato describes vision beyond the heavens as knowledge (247d7), blissful (250c4), blessed (250cb7), and the "place beyond the heavens" itself is described as the Plain of Truth (248b8).

Let us summarise our discussions so far. Although Plato offers a different conception of religion, its structure is inspired by tradition. Traditional religion conceives gods as causally effective powers who affect the career of the world, gods who are immortal living beings dwelling on Olympus, and whose immortality is nourished somehow by their feasting on the ideal meal of ambrosia and nectar, and who are ideal exemplifications of human life - wise, good, fair, everlastingly blessed and happy. Plato espouses a new religion but does so by using religious elements and imagery of Homeric theology and the mystery religions. In addition to the presence of the Homeric gods by explicit mention (Zeus, 246e, 250b, 252e; Hera, 253b; Apollo, 253b; Ares, 252c; cf. *Ti* 40dff.) or allusion ('for the rest, all such as are ranked in the number of the twelve as ruler gods lead their several companies, each according to his rank', 247e), there is mention of heavenly feasting and banqueting (247a), chariot driving by Zeus and other gods, ambrosia and nectar (247e), and the brilliant, pure light of the divine realm (250b-c). The attainment of the vision of the Forms is likened to initiation into the sacred, purifying mystery in strong terms redolent of the Eleusinian mysteries; we have sight of and initiation into the mystery rites (250b8; spectacles of bliss, 247a4; the full vision of the perfect mysteries, 249c7-8. But Plato has appropriated naive religious truth in order to transpose it onto a higher level. He explains that it is by being located *in* the

heavens that gods are composites of soul and body. However, their immortality arises from the essential nature of their soul *qua* soul, i.e., as self-mover rather than by birth-right. And a self-mover is the first principle of all becoming, and the orderer and carer of all that is inanimate. Thus gods are not idle beings feasting ceaselessly in leisure on Olympus. They do honest work in the universe as a whole. By their causal powers they conduct the astronomical revolutions, and through that cause the generation and perishing of phenomena, as well as care for all that is inanimate. All this is acceptable to tradition. But the most significant truth which enboldens Plato to speak out is that Forms, not gods, are the ultimate realities, and that it is the constant vision of Forms by gods which explains the latter's very being as wise, fair, good, everlastingly happy and blessed divinities ordering and caring for the phenomenal world. Thus, the perfections of god - perfections which serve as standards for all other souls which follow god - logically depend on the prior existence of Forms. It is Forms, not ambrosia and nectar, which constitute the real and proper "food" by which the god-souls, but also human souls, are nourished, and it is by possessing reason that souls are able to "ascend" to the intelligible "realm" of Forms.

3 The movement approach to religion

The metaphor of god-souls "ascending" the summit of the heaven towards Forms which *reason alone* can behold is replaced, in the movement approach, by the explanation that god-souls are, by definition, motions of pure, divine Reason whose objects of cognition are Forms. The movement approach, first intimated in the *Phaedrus*, appears more informatively in the *Philebus*,

Timaeus, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Epinomis*, *Laws*. The argument from movement culminates in the demonstration that, given the universe as a cosmos, i.e., as an orderly system, any plausible account of it will consist in an argument to the rule of divine Reason in the cosmos as a whole. Generally in these dialogues, the rule of divine Reason in the cosmos is associated with the motions of a cosmic soul or the set of celestial motions; and there is an intimation that Reason is imbued with paradigmatic Forms. Hence, the properties of Forms are transmitted to the visible world through the motions of Reason. Let us begin with the *Laws*.

In *Laws* x, Plato proposes that legislation could be a viable instrument for moral regeneration and spiritual enrichment provided laws are genuine imitations of the rule of divine Reason in the cosmos at large. Believing that materialism is one of the intellectual foundations of immoralism, impiety or atheism (889ff.), he essays an argument from motion to prove spiritual priority over body, and the rule of divine Reason in the cosmos as a whole. He begins by arguing that his materialist contemporaries or predecessors are mistaken in their approach to the study of the universe. This involves their thesis (889aff.) that everything comes to be by "nature", "chance" or "art". They espouse a cosmogony or cosmology, taking the primary bodies, fire, air, earth, water, and their chance and mechanical relations, as sufficient to account for the evolution of the cosmos or for phenomena.[10] In this materialist philosophy, the existence of values and gods are assigned to art, conceived as "unnatural"

[10] This is a paraphrase, not Plato's exact words.

constructions of the imagination. It is as creations of art, argue the materialists, that gods and values vary from place to place. Plato argues to the contrary that all physical or phenomenal features - being "hard", "soft", "light", "heavy", "hot", "cold" (892b, 897a) depend on ten possible forms of motion reducible to two basic ones: bodily or moved motion and self-moving motion. Moved motion can cease to move at some time; and when it moves it must be moved by something other than itself, whereas self-moving motion is *ever* in motion. Hence, insofar as things in the universe are in motion, i.e., come to be, their motion depends on or presupposes self-moved motion (also *Phdr.* 245cff.).

Plato then defines soul as "self-moving motion" (896a, also *Phdr.* ibid), qualified later as "motion of Reason" (*nou kinēsis*, 897d). Hence, soul means "rational self-motion", or "Reason-in-motion" (cf. *Ti.* 34a, 35a-37c, 40b). Its manner is indicated as orderly, uniform, regular, rotary, revolutionary, lawful and according to plan (898a-b, *Epin.* 982bff). The state of such a soul is said to be "happy", "virtuous", "prudent", "blessed", "divine", and "supremely good" (897b; *Epin.* 891e).[11] Plato calls such a soul the primary source of all things (896c). Soul is that which conducts the revolutions of all things, and is that by which the circle of the heavens is turned about with all foresight and order (898c). The very forms of Soul's motions are forms of consciousness: "wisdom", "law", "moods", "habits of mind", "wishes", "calculations", "purposes", "memories", "judgement" "reflection", "counsel", "foresight", "pleasure and pain", "art",

[11] Although this is not textually stated, it is clear both in context and description that a blessed, supremely good, divine, etc., soul is cosmic or astronomical soul, the one which is closest in contact with Forms. Accordingly, I shall so refer to it.

"hope", "fear", "hate", "love" (896c-d, 892b), "control" (*dioikein*, 896e), "governance" (*archousan*, 896c), "care" (903b, *Phdr.* 246b). Thus, if the materialists mean by "nature" the phenomenal world, it derives rather from divine art and mind (892b) which are presupposed in phenomenal changes. And insofar as the materialists may also mean by "nature" that which is primary, Soul, rather than fire, etc, is eminently natural, since its motions - wish, purpose, wisdom, art, etc., take precedence over body (reading, 892b-c). Next, Plato moves to call Soul god (899a). This is not an illegitimate move. As we have seen, the idea of causal power realistically conceived grounds the basic Greek idea of god (cf. *Epin.* 983d). A further move from "god" to "gods" is made with reference to the multiplicity of Soul's celestial embodiments in the numerous stars and planets (899b, and *Epin.* 891e; *Ti.*40a-b).

As primary motion, Plato speaks of Soul as the governor and primary source of all things. Soul is said to *govern* (*archousēs*) body according to nature (*Laws* 986c, 898c). Elsewhere, Soul as first principle of motion is said to be immortal, unbegotten, and imperishable (*Phdr.* 245c9, d; cf. *Laws*, 904b, 967d; cf. *Epin.* 982a), ruler and mistress of the universe (*Ti.* 34c), carer and orderer of all that is inanimate and controller of the whole world (*Phdr.* 246b), moulder and fashioner of body (*Epin.* 981c). Nevertheless, Plato still speaks of Soul as "older than body", "the first of comings-to-be" (*Laws*, 896b, 892a, 967d; also *Ti.*34c.). Against this he speaks of an eternal "King" distinguished from the gods recognised by law, who governs or cares for all, and systematically orders all things with a view to the preservation

and virtue of the whole (*Laws*, 903bff.). The question that arises is: what is the relation between Soul and Reason, or between Soul and the eternal King? Alternatively, does Plato have two governors and carers - Soul and the King - of one and the same cosmos? The answer is this: the definition of soul as "motion of Reason" (in *Laws* x), together with the characterisation of motions of Reason in terms of consciousness - "wisdom", "purpose", "wish", "art", "calculation", etc., suggests that the eternal King is Reason. In the *Timaeus*, Soul is distinguished from divine Reason called Father (28c), and the latter is presented poetically as creating the former. Although I claim that Soul just is motion of Reason, I do not thereby imply that Soul is identical with Reason. The following argument, divisible into two subsections (a) and (b) concludes: that (a) *not all* Reason is in the cosmos or, in other words, Soul is that part of Reason immanent in the cosmos; and that (b) since *immaterial, changeless* Forms are the fundamental causes and principles of whatever order, intelligibility, goodness, etc., there is in the *material* and *changing* cosmos, Plato requires Reason as a "mediating"[12] agent whose ontological credentials enable it to transmit the properties of Forms to the physical world by means of motion. Consequently, if we understand that Plato views order, etc., in phenomena as made out of, and extending over, that which is inherently chaotic (viz., bodies), we then see that it is reasonable to assume an analytical distinction between (i) a regulatory and constructive function of Reason which bestraddles the intelligible "realm" of Forms and the physical

[12] "Mediating" requires qualification in respect of the question at hand, i.e., what is the relation, if any, between Forms and Reason? This question will be addressed in a note infra.

"realm", and (ii) a contemplative function of Reason outside the soul-body complex, unaffected by the natural, corrupting influence of the corporeal. Let us now attend to the evidence.

(a) In an array of factors constitutive of the cosmos in the *Philebus* (30a-b) - Limit, Unlimited, the Cause, and the Mixture - the Cause, which is synonymous with Reason (22c, 28d, 30c) is said both "to furnish" ("create", *Timaeus*) the soul of the universe, and to be "the best of causes" (30e). At 30c9-10, we read that Wisdom (*sophia*) and Reason (*nous*) - probably the same thing - could not be present (*genoithen*) without soul. At *Ti.* 28b, The Creator (= Reason, 48a), which is the best of causes (29a), is the first principle of becoming (*archē geneseōs*, 28b). Reason not only creates Soul in the *Timaeus*, it is also argued (30b) that in order that the cosmos might be of its nature most beautiful (*kalliston*) and most good (*ariston*), Reason fashioned the world by endowing it with a soul; and that Reason cannot possibly be present (*paragenesthai*) in anything apart from soul (cf.*Ti.* 30b).[13] It is further implied that soul must be present in body. These passages could mean one of two things: either that (i) if a

[13] Cf. the *Statesman's* myth in which God (= Reason) is said to make Soul and to form the ordered world-body. The circuits of soul are referred to as God's own rotations or circuits which are under his own control (269c8-d1, 273b6-7). At *Epin.* 983b, the author bluntly states that the universal governorship of Soul presupposes a God who alone has the power to impart soul, and that it is easy for God to give life to any body and then to set it moving as it judges best. At *Craty.* 400a Hermogenes and Socrates agree that Reason *or* Soul is the ordering and containing principle of all things. "You may", says Socrates, "well call that power *phuechē* which carries and holds nature (*he phusin ochei kai echei*) and this may be refined away into *psuchē*". Beneath the verbal fanfare is a doctrinal seriousness: the ordering and containing of all nature (*phusis*) is a psycho-rational function. "Reason *or* Soul" are two ways of conceiving this function.

thing is rational then it is a soul, or (ii) when Reason is in something, what it is in must be ensouled. That (ii) is what is meant is further supported at *Soph.* 248e-249a. There the Stranger gets assent to his thesis that motion, life, soul and Reason are really present in complete Being which is neither devoid of Reason, fixed nor immovable. It is then said that if it [sc. complete Being] has Reason, it must have life, and if it has both Reason and life, it cannot possess them except in soul. The argument, therefore, is that there is soul where Reason is present. It is noteworthy that Plato is not talking of Reason *simpliciter*, but only of Reason as it is possessed by or as is present in something else.

Given that soul is defined in terms of motion, the following passage is supportive of the above conclusion. *Soph.* 249b-c argues that: (i) If there is no motion, there is no Reason (*nous*) in anyone about anything anywhere. (ii) On the other hand, if we admit that all things are in flux and motion we shall remove Reason itself from the number of existing things. (iii) Sameness of quality, nature or relations could never come into existence without the state of rest. (iv) Without these - namely, sameness of quality, etc. - you cannot see how Reason could exist or come to be anywhere. Now (i) establishes that there is motion *where* Reason is present. (ii) denies (i) where there is motion *and* flux. (iii) and (iv) qualify (i) by establishing a condition for (i) to be true, viz., Reason is present only where there is motion of sameness of quality, nature or relations.[14] That is, there is

[14] In a discussion of causes at the end of the *Sophist*, spontaneous causes (*aitias automatēs*, 265c7) are said to generate without intelligence (*aneu dianoias phousēs*, 265c8) and are specifically contrasted to causes like Soul which *arise from* divinity (*apo theou*, 265c9) and are endowed with

rational motion or motion that is not in flux where Reason is present. This comes back to Plato's thesis that soul is motion of Reason. But it also shows that by this Plato is not claiming that soul *is* Reason, for he is not talking of Reason *simpliciter* but only of Reason as is present in something else. This allows us to infer reasonably, that given the definition of Soul as motion of Reason, Plato conceives of Soul as the regulatory and efficient aspect of Reason or, in other words, the part of Reason present in the visible cosmos. The *Sophist* passage just considered (249b-c) also intimates that Reason in motion imparts properties of Forms to the cosmos; for sameness of quality, nature and relations in motion intimate the presence of properties of Forms in rational motion. This is poetically articulated in the creation story of the *Timaeus*, a brief discussion of which will point to conclusion (b) above which, in other words, is that Reason "mediates" Forms *and* the physical world in the form of Soul.

(b) In the *Timaeus* the universe is presented as a unique animal produced by God (Reason), nicknamed the Craftsman (Demiurge).[15] God, we are told, was good, and being free from jealousy,[16] desired that all things should be good, i.e., be a similitude of Himself *or* the Eternal (*Ti.* 29e; 30c).[17]

reason and knowledge (*meta logou te kai epistēmēs*, 265c8).

[15] *R.* vii, 530a; *Soph.* 265c-266d; *St.*, 269c-273e, *Phil.* 26e-27b, 28d-30e.

[16] Olympian theology saw no contradiction between just gods who were also envious of human prosperity; their own ideal life set the bounds across which human effort is presumptuous, impious, and deserving of nemesis. As we shall see, Plato, like Socrates, thinks that similitude to god is the consumation of true piety.

[17] But also Plato often paraphrastically uses "eternal being" for Forms (*R.* 484b4, 485b2, 500c2-3, 527b5, 7, 585c1-2, 611e3; *Ti.* 29a1, 3, 35a2, 37b3 37e5, 48e6, 505c5; *Phil.* 59a7).

Wherefore, finding the whole visible sphere not at rest, but moving in an irregular and disorderly fashion, out of disorder he brought order (*taxis*). God imposed order (30b) by projecting paradigmatic and intelligible Forms, shape and number onto an otherwise inherently chaotic, and unintelligible bodily nature (53a, b3-5, 69b4). Reason is said to have "looked to and used" or "had a view to" the Form of animal[18] which is in every way

18 Unless one can show that Plato is careless about "Himself *or* the Eternal", the indifference here signified by "or" suggests that although Reason and Forms may not be identical, they are so closely related as to be alternative ways of refering to the same thing. "Eternity" or "eternal" (*aionios*) is said of Forms distributively. Secondly, the cosmos is described as "good" and "beautiful". But this is the result of the doctrine that (1) Reason is good, and it is impossible that the product of the good be anything but good (30a), *and* (2) the goodness and beauty of the product imply the pre-existence of Forms. *If* (1) and (2) are compatible, this may suggest that the causality of Reason depends Forms, but not necessarily that Reason is subordinate to Forms. Indeed, *Ti.* 36e-37a says that the Demiurge is the best of intelligible and eternal beings (*tōn nōetōn aei te ontōn*), and 37c calls the cosmos, 'the becoming image of the eternal gods' (*tōn aidiōn gegonos agalma*). In context, "eternal beings" and "eternal gods" are proxy for Forms. And these texts do not suggest that Reason is subodinate to Forms. But if not, and if Plato is not careless either in saying "Himself *or* the Eternal", or in using "Eternal gods" for "Eternal Forms", he may well mean that these are different ways of looking at the same thing, and possibly that Reason [or gods are] is the subjective aspect of Forms - so that Reason and Forms are distinguishable as analytical elements in an account of the cosmos. If this were the case, it would follow that my expression "mediates" in 'Reason mediates Forms and sensible things' will be a metaphor born of the exigency of analysis. So too would the expression 'Reason has a "view to" Forms'. However, if the possibility exists that Reason and Forms are more than analytically distinct, still, the phrase 'Reason "has a view to", "uses" Forms' would require a non-poetic understanding, since Reason cannot literally have a view or a use of something existing independently of itself. Likewise, "contemplation" (of Forms), understood as a Platonic technicality will not do. For it has to do with a quality of life rather than a "bird's eye" view of Reason. Thus it is more plausible to see Forms, Reason and Soul as analytically distinctive aspects of one and the same thing rather than as ontologically separate entities. With these qualifications in mind, I shall

complete (29e-30d, 31b1) rather than specific Forms of animal or their images, 'for no image of an incomplete (*atelei*) thing is ever good. So the cosmos is an image or a copy of the Form of animal (30d-31a). The completeness of this Form is, therefore, necessary for the result to be *kalliston* and *ariston*. But in what consists completeness? It consists, I think, in its being a standard-establishing property or condition.[19] If this is true, Demiurgic performance will be estimated by two complementary criteria, ontological and epistemic;[20] by the extent to which His product reproduces (1) that which a Form *qua* an ontological standard archetypically, perfectly, and purely is, and (2) the formal properties or conditions in which a Platonic standard exists *qua* standard, viz., (2i) uniqueness, (2ii) uniformity, (2iii) invariance, (2iii) eternality, (2iv) immateriality, hence its invisibility; (2v) divinity.[21]

However, the Demiurge, like all Greek gods, is not omnipotent. Consequently, he cannot be expected to make invisible and divine, what is by definition the principle of visibility, corruption, and chaos, namely, the primary bodies. Plato acknowledges this when he insists that the Demiurge desired that 'all things should be good and nothing bad *as far as this is attainable*' (30a). Moreover, "divinity", in context, as a standard-establishing property or condition, is a second-order predicate; it characterises the standard-establishing conditions in which Forms exist, viz., (2i-iv).

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henceforth use "mediate" and cognate terms without quotation marks.

19 For completeness as a mark of standards and measures, see *R.*, 477a3, 504c1-3, 597a5; *Phil.*, 201d1-6; cf. 60c2-4, 65b8, 66b1-2.

20 Plato arrives at the ontological on the basis of the epistemic.

21 See *Phdo.* 78c6-9; 79a1-11, 78c1-3, 78c10-d, 79a, 79c-d, 65a-c, 80d5; *Ti.* 28c-29

On the other hand, the whole Demiurgic "creation", which consists in imposing order on disorder, reduces to the investment of the physical world with Soul, which is the image of the Form of animal. In other words, this cosmos is as it is - beautiful (*kalon*) and good (*ariston*) - because of the presence in it of Soul. But Soul is not only immortal, it is also immaterial, hence, invisible. Moreover, that which is immortal, i.e., self-moving, is divine. Therefore, insofar as there is a cosmos, it is permeated by an immaterial, invisible, divine Soul. From this point of view, requirements (2iv, v) - immateriality or invisibility and divinity as standard-establishing conditions or properties of the Form of animal are satisfied in the cosmos. But how is completeness satisfied with respect to requirements 2i-iv? First, uniqueness.

Form, as a perfect standard, is unique, according to Plato. So "completeness", as a standard-establishing property or condition, must be primarily predicable of the original (Form) and derivatively of its visible copy (the cosmos as a whole). Since the copy too is to serve, *formally*, as a standard in the visible sphere, it must be unique, otherwise, claims Plato, an infinite regress will be generated (31a-b).[22] (1) Ontologically, the Form of animal is pure animality (animal-in-general, or universal animal), its image

[22] Cf. *R.* 597c for uniqueness of individual Forms as standards. For, if two Forms are such that they may both equally serve as standards for the same type of thing, they would have to be numerically distinct but formally similar to each other. Otherwise we would not know that they were of equal service as standards for the same type of thing. But the condition of similarity or formal identity between them destroys the very possibility that either of them is a standard. This condition is a third thing which neither of them is, if, by hypothesis, all identicals exist by reference to standards and not by reference to merely relative comparisons. So that this third factor rather than they, would be the standard for their kind. They would be mere instantiations of it.

is the immaterial, divine soul of the cosmos. The uniqueness of cosmic soul, as an image of the Form of animal, consists in the fact that just as the original is animal-in-general, so the image is cosmic or universal soul, i.e., soul directed to body in general and not to any specific body. Thus the Form of animal is said to contain, embrace, encompass as its parts, all the specific Forms of animal (30c7-8, 31a4-5). The parts of the Form of Animal are not only ontological. They are also logical. Hence, the unique Form cannot be reduced to the parts (cf. *Soph.* 253d). The "universal" Form (of animal) is present in the more specific Forms as extending through them (cf. *diatetemenē*, *Soph.* 253d6); nevertheless, the universal Form exists in logical and substantial independence of its parts by permeating or encapsulating them (d8). This is indicated at *Ti.* 34b by saying that the Demiurge caused Soul to be extended throughout the world-body and wrapped the body round with Soul on the outside.

That the universal Form of Animal is unique by being logically and substantially independent of its parts may also be viewed from Plato's conception of a living thing, which is just a soul or a soul-in-body.[23] The Form of "living thing" is [universal] Soul or Soul directed to body [-in-general]. The primary bodies in which soul finds itself will specify the types of creatures there are. The specific Forms of animal will be defined by the elements - fire, air, water, earth (*Ti.* 51b). Thus gods are described as essentially souls in mostly fire-body and residing in the fire or astronomical region. Fish or water creatures are souls in mostly water-body and residing in water region. Birds or air creatures are souls in mostly air-body and residing in the air region. Solid, fleshy

[23] *Phdo.* 105c9-11; *Ti.* 30b4-5, with 7-8; *Soph.* 246e5-7.

creatures are souls in mostly earth-body and residing on earth (40a; cf. 91e-92c; *Epin.* 982aff.)). 41d with 34c-36 add an explanation of mortality as arising from a mathematically structural gradation to a second or third degree of the soul-structure of the star-gods. However, the existence, number, and nature of the bodily elements and their Forms are not entailed by the Form of animal. If one may use the language of "genus" and "differentia", we might say that in Plato, the *differentiae* of the kinds of animals are not differences contained in the general notion of animal such that if they did not exist, then it would not exist. The *differentiae* are thereby not qualifications or constitutive determinations of Soul *qua* Soul (cf. *Soph.*257c7-d5). As Platonic species, the parts of animal are incomplete as being inadequate as standards for animality; for they are posterior to the Form of animal in which they participate and which exists over and above them as itself a unity quite independent of their being parts of it. Thus for Plato, but not for Aristotle, it is possible to have an animal that is not any particular kind of animal. So that the world-animal is a unique instantiation of the Form of animal without being a particular kind of animal; for it includes every iota of material there is, all confined in a spherical space (58a). The uniqueness condition is thus satisfied.

Apart from uniqueness, the standard-establishing properties or conditions of "invariance", "uniformity" and eternality are satisfied in the motions of Soul. Plato pictures the creation of Soul as a blending of Being, Sameness and Difference. Mixing these up in a bowl, the Demiurge produces an immaterial, self-moving "stuff" which he cuts up into strips and joins the ends into mobile circular

bands. Plato thus gives expression to his thesis that rotary motion is "the most appropriate for reason and intelligence", and is a movement which especially belongs to Reason (*nous*) and Intelligence (*phronēsin*, 34a). Only thus, Plato thinks, can the absolute invariance and uniformity of Forms be approximated within the ceaseless variance which is inherent in bodily flux. The first of the soul-circles the Demiurge puts at the circumference of the cosmos to produce "the movement of the same", a movement which Plato thinks runs through the whole universe: everything in the cosmos, from its periphery down to the centre of our earth, is subject to this motion (36e2-3). For Plato, the innumerable stars are ever-lasting gods (37b6). Their predominantly fiery body, is in a perfectly self-contained sphere and they enjoy intelligence of unpeturbable rationality, not being subject to the bodily influx and efflux which afflict our reason (*Ti.* 43a). The visible motions of the countless multitude of the fixed stars is exclusively the movement of the Same. But the sun, the moon, and the five planets, have visible motions which exhibit also movement of the Different.

Plato seems to be reconciling his *a priori* conviction that all celestial motion is rotary with the empirical facts concerning the "wandering" motions of the seven stars - the sun, moon, and the five planets. He designs to effect this reconciliation by the hypothesis that the sun, moon, and planets are in every case compositions of *un*wandering circular motions proceeding in different planes in different directions at different velocities. Each of these motions exhibits a long term solution of its own from which the fixed stars are totally exempt. First, all of their periods

are much longer, with wide variations in length among them. Secondly, these orbits proceed in different planes from those of the fixed stars. Finally, all of these orbits exhibit "turnings" (*tropai*), points of maximum deviation north and south at which the wandering stars turn back and proceed in the reverse direction until the opposite point of turning has been reached. Because of the invariant periodicity of their motions the stars provide measures of time. The sun contributes the spectacular alterations of light and darkness caused by its rising and setting, and the year by its annual circuit. The moon's eastward circuit of the heavens gives us the lunar month. The periods of the five planets too, if they had been determined, would have further units of time-reckoning. If a clock may be defined roughly as a regularly repeating motion with some marker which makes possible the counting of the repetitions, Plato's abstract expression of this is in his claim that time proceeds or revolves numerably (37d6-7, 38a7-9),[24] and he implies that the wandering stars or planets are the markers whose circuits are the regularly repeating motions and the measurable.[25] 37c-38e makes it clear that

[24] The concept of time as celestial clock(s) in the *Timaeus* is an elaboration of the one mooted in the brief discussion of astronomy in the *Epinomis* and *R* vii, 528e-530d.

[25] Insofar as these markers are ensouled bodies, and soul is immortal, the phenomenal "realm" which depends on the markers is sempiternal - that is, exists through all time by existing at all times (possible dates) infinitely into the past and infinitely into the future. In this sense, they are *qua* standards of time not subject to dating and are thus eternal, since it is the very basis of measuring time or dating (37d7). But by being bodily, the celestial clock markers possess only partial sempiternality because their even repetitiveness and numerability do not exist in unqualified eternity; for the possibility of a corporeal dissolution of the celestial clock back into Chaos is possible, and is thus entertained (38b7, cf. *St.*273c-e). When Plato refers to "it was", "it will be" as *eidē* (forms ,

Plato intends the Demiurge's introduction of time to be viewed as a production of a sensible standard, so that the introduction of time and the making of the universe into a unique animal are parallel projects of image-making (39e3-4) - to mirror the condition of eternity of the original standard Form.[26] Thus the circuits which constitute a regulatory function of Soul explain how the planets contribute to the maintenance of such stability, order, intelligibility, time, number, as there is in the cosmos.[27] It is clear that these properties of the cosmos - stability, order, goodness, etc., imply that Soul is imbued with forms.

To summarise. The universe is a cosmos whose fundamental principles are a system or "fabric" of intelligible, immaterial and immutable Forms permeated by the universal Form of Good. But by being intelligible, immaterial and immutable, it is difficult to

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kinds) of time (37e), he is referring, I believe, to time measured or measurable against a standard, and are therefore posterior to that standard. So that the Demiurge "makes" past and future does not mean that there was a time past prior to his creations, nor does it stand in blatant contradiction to Timaeus' narrative according to which there was a past time prior to the formation of the Heavens. The talk of "past" and "future" presupposes a standard of Eternity for temporal measure. Accordingly, we must view Timaeus's talk of pre-cosmos time as an exigency of narrative account.

26 See 37d5, 7; 38a7, 38b8-c1, 39e1-2

27 In the *Statesman*, Soul maintains the homeostatic conditions inherited from the Demiurge against the necessary, erratic, and even explosive incursions of body (273a, c-d). The reverse circuits represent nothing over and above the disorderly motions in the cosmos. In the *Philebus* (30a-c), Soul maintains the homeostatic conditions of body which is in flux (43a, 59a-b). The order of the world-body is derived from the transcendent rationality of the Demiurge which is the cause of the presence of Soul and its rationality in the ordered world-body (30c-d). Soul is viewed as standing to the order of the universe, as represented in the years, seasons, and months, as our souls stand to our bodily order as represented in health (30b-c).

see how Forms can be the principles of the material and changing cosmos. Plato's way out is to supply the medial *agency* of divine Reason who relates to Forms as objects of its knowledge and who, as an *agent*, needs to articulate itself. It does so in its aspect as a principle of motion. Reason's motion is otherwise called Soul,[28] and is specified as rotary or circular self-movement. A self-mover implies, at least, the existence of a moved thing.[29] The self-mover is not only prior to, but is also the cause of the moved. All physical or chemical movements fall under "the moved".[30] Hence, Soul is by definition the *archē* of all becomings, where "becoming" entails bodily or phenomenal existence. But, although Reason is immanent in the cosmos in the form of Soul, it is not immanent uniformly and without qualification. It is more truimphant in the fiery, astronomical or lunar sphere than in the sublunar sphere. The astronomical sphere is constituted by the set of countless rotary stars and the set of wandering or revolving stars or planets. Both sets execute a complex variety of circular, rotary and revolving motions; and these in turn constitute the

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[28] Since divine Reason or its phenomenal aspect, Soul, is *immaterial*, Plato has no answer to the problem of how an immaterial reality relates to and controls the material. But this is a problem which all dualists face.

[29] Although Plato did not specifiy these, he implies them.

[30] Plato seems to contradict himself when he sometimes conceives body as inert, as in the *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, and sometimes, as in the *Timaeus* and *Statesman*, as a dynamically non-rational factor. This is not strictly true. From the middle period to the late period, Plato's moral psychology has been built on an assumption that bodily nature is, at least a *potent* condition of the conflicting tendencies in our soul. Moreover, the primacy of psychic motion is established in an *account* of phenomena. It is arguable, then, that any plausible account of phenomenal existence presupposes two basic interractive motions - self- and moved- motion, the latter of which is in eternal dependence on the former. Since such an account was not the issue in the middle period dialogues, the irratic nature of body was intimated but there was no need to emphasise it.

standard motions for, and the cause of, all sublunar motions. It is by means of the astronomical motions that Reason in motion transmits the causality and the standard-establishing properties of Forms to the physical world; it is in this indirect way that Forms are the *fundamental* principles of phenomena.

Divine Reason is called God, but so too is its derivative, Soul, and, indeed, all the countless motions of Reason inhabiting the stars. Moreover, the power and causality of the gods are defined in terms of motion. Thus Plato's gods are gods of motion, but motion of the sort which is fully invested with the properties of Forms. Insofar as divine, psychic motion is the *archē* of all becomings, the cosmos may be said to be permeated by the divine. As Plato himself recognises (*Laws* 899ff.), this conclusion links his cosmology directly to the Presocratics whose *archē*, often named god, is an *archē* of motion. For Plato, however, it is in terms of Forms that the motion-gods impart justice, care, time, number, order, intelligibility, goodness, beauty etc., into the cosmos. It is also in terms of the Forms that the motions of the gods are described as orderly, uniform, intelligent, etc., and the god-souls are said to be in a state of wisdom, goodness, virtue, happiness, blessedness, knowledge, having truth and foresight, etc. Consequently, whatever perfections gods have depend on Forms. We may now ask: where does human life fit in this broad scheme of Plato's cosmos? In other words, in what consists Plato's religion? The rest of this chapter is devoted to an attempt to answer this question. I shall argue that for Plato, religion consists in activities in love of wisdom (*sophia*), which is a state of soul imbued with Forms. Since *sophia* is the chief property of god, it

follows that the function of human life is to be like god. The issue, then, is how we can come to be imbued with Forms, and what follows from a failure to pursue knowledge of Forms.

4 Religion as activity in love of *sophia*.

For Plato, as for Socrates, *philo-sophia*, love of wisdom, and religion coincide. The *Phaedo*, e.g., is dedicated to the proof of the immortality of the soul, but by way of justifying the philosophical life as the best form of life which answers fully to the spiritual needs, desires and hopes of man; for, if the soul is shown to be deathless and to be the source of all happiness and misery, then, it is of utmost importance that one must strive for the optimum state of the soul: ...'but since it [sc. soul] is immortal, there would be no refuge from ills or salvation from it, except to become as good and wise as possible. For the soul enters Hades taking nothing but its education and nurture, which are said to do the greatest benefit or harm to the one who has died...' (107c-d); and philosophers are the best placed to reap this greatest benefit (63e10-65). At *Phdr.* 249c-d, we hear that 'it is meet and right that the soul of the philosopher *alone* should recover her wings, for she, so far as may be, is ever near in memory to those things a god's nearest thereunto makes him truly god. Wherefore if a man makes right use of such a means of remembrance, and ever approaches to the full vision of the perfect mysteries, he and he alone becomes truly perfect'. At *R.* 500d, it is said that 'the lover of wisdom associating with the divine order will himself become orderly and divine in the measure permitted to man'. Or, *Epin.* 986c-d: 'In a happy man this [sc. divine, celestial] order awakens first wonder, and then passion to learn all of it that mortality may;

for thus will he spend his days best and with most good fortune, and after his death reach the proper abode of virtue, as he has been initiated into the true and real mysteries by receiving *wisdom* in her unity in a reason which is itself a unity'.

But the desire to be truly wise entails that the aim of human life is to become like god or to join the company of gods.[31] Consequently, to achieve the standard of goodness and happiness associated with god, we must orient our lives towards the cognition of Forms, or towards the closest approximation to motions of Reason of the virtuous sort exhibited by starry behaviour (*Ti* 41e-42b). In the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus*, and elsewhere, Plato explains the difference between a god-soul and a human-soul as ontologically differentiated by the environments to which they relate: god-souls relate to a (predominantly) fiery environment which is perfectly conformable to rational self-movement; human souls relate to a recalcitrant, a more disorderly, (predominantly) earthily environment.[32] Thus our happiness, goodness, and spiritual salvation, depend on the success with which we are able, *appropriately*,[33] to bring rational order to the non-rational tendencies in our soul (*Ti*. 42). And this further entails that a human life be permanently informed by the "vision" of Forms. The questions that arise are: (I) is there any basis for the human soul to come to know Forms? If there is, (2) by what means can

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31 *Phdo*. 79d-81a; *R*. 501b, 613e; *Theae*. 176a-b; *Laws* 716c-717a

32 To remind ourselves of a previous note: the *Timaeus* adds that the human soul is mathematically a degradation of the god-soul.

33 Not any and every way is appropriate. Certainly initiation rites of the Orphic faith will not do. Plato's favourite way is intellectual education, ideally, dialectical philosophy, or laterly, astronomical studies.

we come to know Forms? (3) In what consists knowledge of Forms? I attempt the following answers.

(I) In the *Meno* and *Phaedo*, the permanent possibility of knowing Forms is stated in a myth according to which the soul has once had a vision of the Forms in its disincarnate existence. Plato thinks that for this to be possible, the soul must be *sungenes*, i.e., be by nature akin to the Forms; it must be *more like* the invisible than the visible.[34] The soul then is conceived as belonging essentially and properly to the "realm" of Forms but as matter of fact resides in this world as well. Hence, the soul in its true nature is pure, simple, divine, etc. In Plato, but with special reference to the *Phaedrus*, the power of soul is specified as erotic energy, that which *tends* to something else to fulfil itself. What soul tends to are Forms. This is what was ignored in Socrates' first speech in which he represented *Erōs* as an irrational force which tends to work contrary to virtue. The first speech neglected and obscured the implicit but important and positive role of *Erōs* in a life ruled by reason. In the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, Socrates rehabilitates himself with the recognition that *Erōs* is a divine power which acts in between men and gods, between the world of mortals and the divine, eternal "realm" of Forms. The divinity of *Erōs* derives from its orientation and its transcendent, non-human origin. *Erōs* points to divine *agatha* and *kala*; its being is apprehended only relative to them.

In practical life, *Erōs* was commonly understood to be the emotional experience of love; it was the passionate desire roused by the physical beauty of the beloved. Plato reads a metaphysical

34 79b16-17, e2-5, 80a-b, 79b, 79e, 80a

basis into it by expanding its meaning to embrace the fundamental drive in mankind to attain a permanent state of happiness; *Erōs* is nothing less than that innate, ineradicable longing in every human being to possess *the good*: 'for the happy are happy in as much as they possess *the good*, and ... there is no need for us to ask why men would want to be happy...' (*Symp.* 205a). If *Erōs* is fundamentally the desire to be happy, fully without end - which is the condition of being divine - it is then implicit in Plato's redefinition of *Erōs* that man by his very nature aspires to the divine condition. In *Symp.* 202, the gods are defined as those beings who are wise, and possess the good and the beautiful, and happiness (*eudaimonia*). They are to be distinguished from men in the degree of possession and enjoyment of goods common to both human and divine life. For gods too are possessed of soul and body, only that their soul and body are united for all time (246c-d).

Our bodily nature presumably accounts for the division of our psychic energy into, at least, three parts[35] - (a) rational, (b)

[35] Although Plato repeatedly insists that the soul is immaterial he does not balk at expressing its nature in physical language. *Timaeus* actually accounts for the three parts of soul as three areas in which, although *diffused* throughout the body, the soul is concentrated (see 69e-70a, 75ff., 89e), the differences in the nature of parts being attributed to the amount of flesh encumbering a concentrated area. The *Timaeus* further explains that when the soul "stuff" is implanted in the body, it becomes subject to sensations and passions, giving rise to all kinds of irrational movements. Later (44dff.) the passions are treated as forming a "mortal" soul, within which he distinguishes a spirited and appetitive part. ("Mortal" must here mean that passions or emotions do not survive the intelligible state of the soul, which is *nous*). In the *Phaedo* too, the soul is said to be *spread* throughout the body but capable of collecting and gathering itself up from all parts of the body into one mass (65c-d, 67c-d, 83a-b). Thus Plato seems to hold generally that disincarnate soul is a simple unit, and that divisions in it arise from the soul's communion with

spirited and (c) appetitive.[36] These parts of the soul are neither "faculties", "principles" nor "aspects". They constitute one soul, in that they are but different ways of channelling one finite stream of spiritual energy correlated to a body at a time. Plato picturesquely compares the parts to channels into which flow this finite stream of spiritual energy.[37] The total flowage is a constant, so that what goes into one channel is lost to the others (*R*.485d-e; cf. 588b7-589b). Therefore, our tendency for spirited and appetitive ends diminishes inversely to the amount of spiritual energy we invest in trying to apprehend Forms. We may conclude that, according to Plato, the soul is akin to and is by nature oriented towards the Forms, and that this is the fundamental basis for the possibility of knowing Forms or of

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body (cf *R*. 610e9-611e3, 612). See two notes below.

[36] Plato is undogmatic about the number of parts at *R*. 443e1, 544d7-9). Plato's classical statement of the parts of soul is in the *Republic*, where each part is described as a "*philo-*" compound: *to philo-mathēs*, calculative- or wisdom- loving part (439d5, 581b7); *to philo-nikon*, lover of victory; *to philo-chrēmaton* - lover of wealth (possessions or *philo-kerdēs*, gains, 581a). This part also loves food, drink and sex.

[37] In the myth of the *Phaedrus*, the main function of soul is exercised by the "charioteer" in its drive towards the apprehension of Forms, the achievement of which makes the function of the "steeds" otiose. For ambrosia and nectar are fed to the steeds only after the charioteer has feasted fully on Forms. In reality the function of ambrosia and nectar in Plato's scheme of things seems to be an exigency of the mythical narrative, and a desire for consistency in the conception of soul generally. For if soul *qua* soul is a principle of movement that relates to a physical environment, Plato would want to maintain that soul *qua* soul is tripartite. This would also enable him to conceptually distinguish "soul" from "Reason". Thus given that the parts of the god-souls are in perfect order, and a god-soul is "nourished" by Forms, Plato's poetry may once be distinguished from his philosophy: the "steeds" of the god-souls are there to symoblise a conceptual distinction between "soul" *qua* soul (whether of man or god) and pure "Reason". Otherwise the "steeds" are functionally otiose.

attaining permanent happiness. How, then, can we come to know Forms?

(2) Plato has two educational instruments as the principal means by which we may come to know Forms; (a) dialectical philosophy, and (b) legislation. Education (with training) is Plato's principal means for attaining happiness, spiritual salvation and bliss. Acccording to the *Timaeus*, 'if a man neglects education he walks lame to the end of his life and returns imperfect and good for nothing to the world below' (44c). The Stranger in the *Epinomis* says that the truest wisdom and the truest piety, and the only sure preserver of moral virtue is astronomy;[38] for in this we learn the rational convolutions of the celestial dance of the heavenly bodies reference to which we bring our minds in conformity with the divine mind. At 992b-c, we are told that one who knows astronomy, i.e., one whose soul becomes attuned to the law, order, and harmonies of the starry convolutions not only becomes truly wise but also when he undergoes what we call death - if he may be said to still endure death, will no longer be subject to a multitude of perceptions but one alloted portion, as he has reduced the manifold in him to a unity, and in it will be happy (cf. *Ti*. 90b-d). The nature of astronomical studies is laid out at 991e. To properly pursue astronomy, one has to learn all geometric constructions, all systems of number, all duly constituted melodic progressions, the single ordered scheme of all celestial revolutions. As a man reflects on these, he will receive the revelation of a single bond of natural interconnection between

38 It was common opinion that there was something impious about astronomy. But now the man who realises that spiritual things are the grounds of physical things will see how false this opinion is.

all the problems in the study. Such a man, we are told (992b) will be happy, blessed, and will rise, in death, having reduced the manifold within him to a unity. It is conceded at 992c that bliss and happiness are possible but for the few - the sober and virtuous of soul - who have mastered the whole content of the blissful science. The hope is that we have never been left unheeded by the forgetfulness and carelessness of the higher powers (991d), given that all of us have the capacity to acquire true wisdom (974b).

The most persuasive and detailed argument for the spiritual value of education is offered in the *Republic*, where Plato proposes a curriculum of education whose pursuit will ensure a facilitation of the best performance of the characteristic function of parts of the soul. The structure and content of the curriculum are based on Plato's recognition of the nature and potential capacities of soul. In this, Plato has a nutritive and dietetic view of the treatment of soul. This is intimated in his criticisms of actual poets, dramatists, sophists, rhetoricians in the *Republic* and elsewhere. At *R*. 605b-c, Plato criticises the mimetic poet for pleasing the irrational part of the soul, by feeding it a hearty meal, and increasing its strength and vitality relative to other parts (cf. 606a-c, 585b4, 585d5-7, 589b7). The kinds of art - poetry and music - which please the possession-loving part, at the expense of the others, is to him psychologically, morally, and politically both unhealthy and unacceptable (411a-412a, 404d-e, 607a).

By recommending that traditional poetry and music be censored, Plato is not necessarily advocating an ascetic programme, if by asceticism is meant an antipathy to any satisfaction of the

possession- and honour- loving parts; for at 571eff., he advises that these be neither starved nor over-fed; and he notes that under the rule of the wisdom-loving part, these other parts will enjoy their appropriate pleasures (586e-587a). The poets fail to understand that the appetitive part is already too large and over-bearing (442a; cf. *Laws* 689a-b). In their ignorance they stuff what needs a reducing diet, as when they describe their characters' excessive sensual gratification; they starve the very part which needs feeding (605e-606a). Yet it is possible and desirable to contrive poetry, music or rhetoric which quiet and soothe the lower parts of the soul in order to render them more easily satisfied and more nearly in tune with the wisdom-loving part (606b-607a)[39] Right at the beginning of education, reinforcement of the rational, and the domestication of the appetitive and the spirited parts come from without in the form of carefully chosen myths, music and poetry.

In an earlier stage of education, religious education is one of the main items in the curriculum. At first the citizens are to be kept out of sight of moral and religious difficulties, and taught simply that all things are ordered for the best by perfectly good gods. The philosopher-king in an ideal state must regard the business of art and poetry as presenting only edifying truths in ethics and religion; that is, in the form such as to inculcate a simple faith in

[39] Given Plato's sensitivity to the power of words, it is likely that the function of myths in Plato is not necessarily a means to satisfy higher truths inaccessible to dialectical expression, but, coming as they usually do at the end of "dialectical" arguments which appeal to the wisdom-loving part of the soul, and in reference to the subject-matter with which they characteristically deal - punishments, rewards, victories and honours in after-life (see *Phdo.* 114d; *G.* 523ff, *R.* 619b-620e), they may be invoked to soothe or sublimate the lower parts of the soul.

the omnipotence of goodness upon those who are not yet prepared to grapple with the problem of evil; 'If they can be got to believe us', says Plato, 'we shall tell our citizens that quarrelling is unholy, and that never up to this time, has there been any quarrelling among the citizens' (378c). In the second stage of education, those capable of it are to face all the problems of life, and are to endeavour to solve them by the aid of philosophic reflexion. At the same time Plato is deeply aware of the transition from the first to the second of these stages. The difficulties, illustrated in the seventh book, arise from the dangers of that period of doubt and criticism with which philosophic enquiry must begin. Plato therefore urges that this "initiation", even in those who are fitted for it, should be delayed till their character has been thoroughly confirmed in the light of what is good, and the hate of what is evil; and that in the great body of the citizens this will not take place at all since the basic requirement of a dialectical nature is already too high for them. For the many, therefore, Plato restores in a higher form, the Greek city-state in which they will be citizens trained in civic virtue, patriotic self-devotion, educated by purified and edifying mythology and environed by many beautiful forms of art. The citizen will lead a simple-minded life anchored in aesthetic and material goodness, grounded in religion and ethical faith which are sheltered from all sorts of doubt and intellectual difficulty.

For the philosophic few who have hitherto outgrown the culture of poetry and mythology, the few for whose mind imaginative pictures no more play essential role, all the difficulties or secrets of science must be revealed. These must exhibit the intellectual

capacity 'to gather the studies which they disconnectedly pursued as children in their former education into a comprehensive survey of their affinities with one another, and with the nature of the things' (537c). They must go through series of intellectual studies of increasing abstraction and generality; studies that tend the soul to contemplate essence (*ousian*, 526e), truth, or what always is. These, in Plato's time, were pursuable through arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, harmonics. Abstract studies of the sort will, it is believed, enhance our rationality; and this has the effect both of tending cognition towards Forms and of reducing our dependence on the sensible, generative, and such contradictions as are given in phenomena.[40]

This entails an intellectual "scaling". As each science deals only with an aspect of nature, its principles are therefore hypotheses and must rest upon something other than themselves. Therefore to reach the ideal of an absolute principle, we must take a synoptic view of the principles of all the sciences, and seek the Form which is at the basis of them all. As in the *Phaedo*, so in the *Republic*, dialectical study is the most general study which brings together all the principles obtained in the special sciences including those of mathematics, and progresses not deductively[41] but regressively by the adoption of higher and

[40] Cf., Ibid., 524e-525a.

[41] In the late dialogues, the sort of dialectics pursued would involve a pair of processes complementary to each other. In the *Phaedrus*, after Socrates had delivered his speeches on *Erōs* and Phaedrus had said that it gave him great pleasure to listen to them, the former proposes to recapitulate the serious part of its content, namely, a pair of principles of procedure which emerge from the speeches (265c-d). The first is to take a synoptic view (*sun orōnta*) and bring widely dispersed things (*diesparmena*) under a single Form (*idean*), so that one may make plain, by marking out

more general principles till one arrives at the adequacy of the unhypothesised principle, the end of the intelligible (532a-b2; cf. 533c9-d8), which is the Good (526e, 527e, 533b).[42] The nature of the Good is presented to us through the imagery of the sun called the 'offspring of the Good most nearly made in its likeness' (506e3-4). As an offspring or the product of that which it is taken to illustrate, the sun is more than an analogy or an arbitrary symbol. It is, in fact, a manifestation or a phenomenal expression of the Good, as it exhibits a material principle of unity. It is a source of heat essential to growth and may be regarded as the cause of the existence of the objects we see. In like manner, Plato wants us to regard the Good as at once the cause of *phenomenal*

each thing, whatever it is that one wants to disclose at that time. He clarifies this by referring to his own marking out of *Eros*: 'whether it was right or wrong, at all events it was that which gave his account lucidity and consistency. The second is that the dialectician must be able to cut up everything at its natural joints, not hacking at any part like a clumsy butcher. See op.cit. 273e1-2; 273d-e; 277cff. However, this second part of the diaeretical practice, while it is a kind of deduction is quite unlike mathematical deduction. Plato is talking more generally about the systematic relation of natural things, not about the deducibilty of one concept from another. Cf. *R.* 5, 473cff., 475c7-9, 476a5-9, esp. 573c, 'He who can view *things* in their connection is a dialectician; he who cannot is not' See further *Laws* 12, 968a7 and 965b7-c3; *St.* 285a-b.

[42] ibid., 517a9-c5, and 508d9-509b. The image of the divided Line is intended to vivify the intellectual path leading to the apprehension of the Good. It shows the related gradations of the intellectual process, as we advance from shadowy images through their visible sources, through number and mathematics, to the hypothetical but intelligible Forms and the Form of the Good. The Cave image too is an allegory of the same dialectical progress of the soul towards the intelligible limit; from the shadowy images cast on the wall of the cave through the objective sources of the images and finally, by the release of the "prisoners" from the cave, to the light of the sun. This last is supposed to parallel the "release" of the soul from the sphere of sense through that of thought towards the intelligible limit of reason, the Good.

existence and knowledge. It is therefore beyond phenomenal existence and above knowledge, as it is that in which they both originate and by which they are united to each other as essential aspects of one whole. By the aid of this analogy, we are at once carried to the ultimate source of truth, human consciousness, intelligence, and virtuous behaviour.

In a dialectical "vision" of the Good, the philosopher is said to contemplate the whole system of the universe, and to become a spectator of all time and existence: he has been carried beyond the State, beyond the morality of wont and use, above the contradictions of ordinary experience, to the *final reason* for phenomenal existence. From this dialectical height the philosopher is expected to return to govern.[43] Having grasped absolute Good, and having thereby reached the limit of intelligence, he is now in a position to determine *what* particulars, and *how* those particulars are related to and contribute to the fulfilment of the Good in the lives of the citizens in the body politic. As far as the philosopher-king is concerned, his dialectical wisdom frees him from the narrow ambitions and desires of the transitory life so far as his mortality permits. He becomes perfectly generous and fearless; all petty cares and grudges have been taken from his heart, as his vision of the Good reconciles him to the deepest meaning of life and to all things. So that he is lifted beyond the tendency to attribute too great importance to any finite good, relieved as he is from the

[43] *Rep.* 500d5 'If then, some compulsion is laid upon him (*tis...autōi anankē genetai..*) to practice stamping on the plastic matter of human nature in public and private the patterns he visions there, and not merely to mold and fashion himself, do you think that he will prove a poor craftsman of sobriety and justice and all forms of ordinary civic virtue?'

passionate impulses which overestimate these finite things: 'For, nothing can be more contrary than such pettiness to the quality of a soul that is ever to seek the integrity and wholeness in all things human and divine' (486a).[44] Thus the attainment of the highest values of ethics and politics find their ultimate basis in a spirit which contemplates and comprehends the universe as a teleological system. The presence of such a spirit in a state will make all the citizens happy and blessed, as far as their mortality permits. For the mass of people in Plato's ideal State, therefore, their good or virtue at all times, like all else in the earlier part of their lives, must be the product, not of philosophic reflexion but of the unconscious influences under which they grow up as members in a society, and of a teaching whose scientific basis derives only from the fact that they are the legislative directives of putatively wise guardians of State. The political ideal which Plato sets before us in the *Republic* is a perfectly unified society in which each individual, confining himself strictly to the function of his nature, shall, in the exercise of that function, be a pure organ of the organism called the State, and in that position contribute to the virtue and happiness of the body politic. This is more or less Plato's position in what is generally believed to be his last work, the *Laws* to which I now turn.

"*Laws*" is an English translation of the Greek *nomoi*. Their scope includes a piece of legislation, rules, morals, and any system of order socially believed and/or practised. The *Laws* of Plato therefore advocate a comprehensive legal coverage of nearly all human activities. Throughout the work, Plato argues or implies

[44] See 517a9-c5.

that the Sophistic *nomos-phusis* distinction is false. In book x especially, he argues that "art", "wisdom", "law", "purpose", "wish", "order", "virtue", "goodness", "happiness", etc., are properties of Reason-in-motion which is the primary form of *phusis* (often rendered "nature"), and on which depends all phenomenal characteristics. Some Sophists categorise god(s), law, artifice, and values as artificial products of human imagination, unrelated to true nature in their sense. By arguing for the priority and control of divine Reason or spirit over matter, Plato seeks to vindicate the reality of religious phenomena on cosmic grounds, and to establish law as a spiritual item, i.e., as an expression of a rational life. So that legislation is the expression, in the human sphere, of the rational order which governs the universe as a whole. The form of order created by reason is what we call law (713e-714a). At 714a and 957c, Plato even suggests an etymological connection between *nous* and *nomos*.[45] Plato's concept of law, therefore, is in accord with *nature* if it is believed to establish on the political stage the fundamental order corresponding to that which obtains in the universe. Such a concept of "nature" is ethical and religious, and therefore morally satisfying (see *Laws* 690b-c). This makes it clear why Plato thinks that a moral bulwark was being provided for his city by the belief in the supremacy of a spiritual world power that works in "alliance" with Reason and "educates" everything towards right and perfect end. This interpretation of "nature" conflicts with the Strongman thesis of Callicles in the *Gorgias* or Thrasymachus in the *Republic*. The State and Law may well be founded on nature, if in nature herself mental and moral values have a fixed and distinguished place, and

[45] See also 632c, 890d, 967d-e.

if the Good itself has a cosmic status. If the universe were the product of material forces indifferent to good and bad, as Plato's adversaries describe it, it would be futile to postulate a natural foundation for the just State.

The legislator's duty is to make the citizens realise in their lives the divine as revealed in the universe. This means to aim at promoting, by correct or genuine legislation, the happiness of those who live under it, by securing for them both human and divine goods. The Athenian announces that the virtues are divine goods whose possession is the only guarantee of happiness (631b-d). Human goods - health, physical strength, beauty, wealth - depend for their realisation on the divine goods of which wisdom is the first, then the temperate condition of the soul, then justice, then courage (631b-632d). The end of legislation, it is emphasised, is complete virtue (688a-b, 697b-c).

In the *Statesman*, Plato distinguishes between original and imitative laws (300cff.)[46] Original laws derive from the *direct* rule of fully rational beings, while imitative ones derive from rulers not fully rational. Hence, the rule of law is said to be the second best method of government. In Plato's conception of art, imitation *per se* is not bad. Indeed, it is implied at *St.* 300c-301b, *Laws* 713b-714b, that law imitates the rule of reason. But for Plato, an artistic production must attain moral, aesthetic and technical perfection, and this involves, as Demiurgic creation shows, not the mere recreation of an appearance but the reproduction, in a different medium, of what a thing is (cf. *Laws* 688bff.). There is an objective standard which a correct or

[46] Cf. *G.* 483bff.; *R.* 338eff; *Theae.* 172a, 177c-d; *Laws* 714bff., 889eff.

genuine law must satisfy, namely, the attainment of the good of the city as a whole (715b), or the establishment in the political and human life of a spiritual priority comparable to that which Plato has discovered in the universe (967e). In the 7th letter Plato emphasises that no good can be expected from laws which serve the interests and are *pros hēdonēn* of a faction.[47] But (i) how may law achieve its aim of securing the good or virtue of a State? and (ii) what is the source of a genuine law?

(i) Law, for Plato, is an instrument of education.[48] Now education involves training children to be good at what they are inclined to pursue in adult life (643b) More generally, education is the way to produce good persons (641c1) or "a rightly disciplined state of pleasures and pains" (653c6-7). To be good is to be virtuous, and to be virtuous is to conduct yourself in accordance with the rule of reason. Hence, if the aim of legislation is virtue, it implies that law facilitates the rule of reason in us. It can do so by directly enhancing our rational power, as per the curriculum for dialectical studies in the *Republic* and/or by sublimating the irrational parts of the soul in order to bring them into conformity with the dictates of reason. It is this second alternative which law stands the most chance of achieving.

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[47] *Epist.*7, 337a, 327c-d, 757c-d; Cf. *Laws* 4. 715aff., 726, 727, 728. For the intimate relations between the gods and the goods of the soul, cf. 716aff, 631bff, 697a-c, 743e;

Critias 120e. Another very characteristic passage is *Epistle* 8, 355a.

[48] Plato's educational principles depend, in the *Laws* as in the *Republic*, on his "theory" of moral psychology. The express tripartition of the soul in the *Timaeus*, *Republic* and *Phaedrus*, is intimated at *Laws* 863a-864c where the Athenian distinguishes three kinds of injustice, arising from domination of soul by anger, pleasure, and ignorance. The rational part remains the only divine and immortal element in us and the source of other virtues (963a, 988b; cf. 713e-714a).

For in the *Laws*, as in the *Republic*, the kind of virtue attainable through higher studies is limited to the few who by nature and nurture satisfy a minimum intellectual requirement already too high for the majority of people. A piece of legislation, however, is addressed to all sorts of people. Hence, the kind of political virtue promoted in the *Laws* is one in which the lower parts of the soul are to be adjusted to the rule of reason. Laws are to be used in establishing institutions and promoting kinds of recreational activities which have the effect of bringing the irrational parts in conformity with the rational self or of facilitating the rule of reason in the polity. The emphasis is to shape the character of the citizens by educating their desires or their feelings of pleasure and pain in the right sort of way in order to make them virtuous or law-abiding. So e.g., the Athenian demands that the legislator supervise all the activities of the citizens, and instruct them as to what is right and wrong by using praise and blame, honour and dishonour, as well as by penalising misbehaviour (631b-632d). And preambles are to be provided for all pieces of legislation in order to persuade for obedience to them. There are also proposals for the institution of drinking parties and the promotion of dancing and music. Children, right from the beginning, are to be educated with respect to the goodness which leads to good citizenship. This will involve bringing the feelings of pleasure and pain in the right relation to the rational part of their soul which will develop later in life.

Dancing and music are not merely recreational: they are forms of self-motion which may or may not be performed correctly, may or may not approximate to reason. Thus there are tunes and dance forms associated with different kinds of character; those

associated with goodness of soul or body are good, and those associated with evil are bad (654e-655b). In consequence of Plato's dietetic and nutritive treatment of soul, it is implied at 655e-656b that if we allow ourselves to enjoy music and dance appropriate to bad characters, we will eventually acquire bad character ourselves. So music and dance, like poetry, have objective standards of correctness. With such a potential for corruption, these kinds of art cannot, therefore, be left uncontrolled (660a-664d). As imitative arts dance and music, for e.g., are subject to Plato's criteria of artistic creation: true imitation must recreate, in a different medium, what it is to moral, aesthetic and technical perfection (688bff.). So the correctness of music and dance is said to depend on "equality of quantity and quality" - whatever this means, not just on pleasantness (667d). In other words, music and dance, if correct, will contribute to making the soul good by recreating forms of cosmic order in the soul (cf. 653c-654a; *R*. 400a, *Ti*. 47c-e, 80b). Thus the same forms of order expressed in the heavens is manifest in the well constituted State, the character of the good man, and in the correct form of music and dance. In thus participating in the correct forms of motion, we are bringing ourselves closer to the divine order in the cosmos. As if to reinforce this, it is further provided that religious festivals, procession, cult-divinities, will, at regular intervals enter the individual's life, and make him feel at each turn close to the divine powers. Appeal is frequently made to worship, cult practice, religion - in short, to the divine element in every form in order to sanction and sanctify through its vitalising presence, the regulations which Plato wishes to see in force. Thus Plato restores

Greek life in its true form in which politics and religion are united.[49]

(ii) What is the source of a genuine law? The answer seems to be fairly obvious. Law in the Athenian's view embodies or expresses reason. Judgements of reason embodied in a decree of the city becomes law (644c-d, cf. 645a). In obeying law, therefore, we are obeying reason, the immortal element in us (713c-714b). This must be read together with the oft-repeated doctrine that it is a principle of nature that the better must rule and the worse obey (726a). If we suppose that Plato has not abandoned his belief that the virtue or characteristic function of reason is to rule by knowledge of Forms, a law *per se* is not necessarily an expression of reason imbued with Forms (965c8-966c). The happiness or virtue of a State would be ideally guaranteed, it seems, by the direct rule of fully rational philosopher-rulers who have knowledge of the Form of Good. The *Laws*, like the *Republic* and *Statesman*, emphasises the primacy of supreme reason in connection with the ideal to which the

[49] See *Laws* 717a-b, 729eff., 738bff., 740b5-c1, 745b, 771d, 774aff., 803cff., 828aff. It is noteworthy, however, that Plato unequivocally condemns irrational faith or magical views on religion. See *Rep.* 364b-e; cf. *Laws* 905d-7d. In the *Laws* he prohibits the introduction of unauthorised private cults which are often orgiastic or superstitious and seem, in fact to have constituted a real social danger in the fourth century. See *Laws* 909d-910e. Plato also provides severe penalties for practitioners of necromancy or magical attack - *katadesis* - because they are harmful socially, not because he believed in their efficacy (933a-e). Right from the *Apology* to the *Laws* Plato speaks of "inspiration" (*enthousiasmos*) of the seers, poets, etc., but with recognisable irony. Such mental processes certainly roused his curiosity. But generally he does not take them seriously as a source of truth, since they are unable to justify their intuitions (cf. *Phdr.* 248d, 290c; *Laws* 908d). Plato, though, gives them a function in his State (*Laws* 828b; cf. *Ti.* 71e-72a)

legislator must aspire. Members of the Nocturnal Council, the highest constitutional authority in the *Laws*, are to follow arguably the same curriculum of education as the philosopher-kings of the *Republic*. In the consumation of their education, they are to have insight into the realm of the One and the Many, of good and evil, and the organisation of all other detail in the light of that insight (cf. *R*. 521c-531d, 531e-534e; *Laws* 965b, 966).

But whereas the *Republic* appears to suggest that sovereignty rests with philosopher-king(s), in the *Laws*, it rests in the laws, not with any individual or a group of them, the suggestion being that the rule of law is second best to the direct rule of reason (*St.* 300D8ff.). Rules of law lay down general standards for the orderly behaviour of persons. In the *Statesman*, it is argued that laws, being general, cannot take account of individual circumstances. The ideal would be the unimpeded rule of a wise man who could deal appropriately with each case. A State governed by law is second best alternative needed only because philosophically wise rulers are not available.[50] In *Laws* 9, there are passages which suggest that if true knowledge and reason are present, laws may well be dispensed with, since written laws with their static dogmatism have inevitable shortcomings.[51]

The difference between the *Republic* and the *Laws*, i.e., between the sovereignty of a philosopher-ruler and the law, may be due to one or more reasons: e.g., that (a) the *Republic* is not concerned with the practicality of how the philosopher-king may

[50] *St.* 293ff., 310eff.

[51] *Laws* 769D, 875c-d.

rule but just how he may arise in the first place, so that the *Laws* fill in the practical details of the rule of philosopher-kings, the curriculum of whose education, after all, follows the same or nearly the same lines as members of the Nocturnal Council; or (b) although Plato, while wishing that members of the Nocturnal Council will go through the same sort of education as the philosopher-king(s), is sceptical about this happening, since the possibility of this happening presupposes some authority believing in, willing and able to carry out the curriculum envisaged in the *Republic*. Since this is practically difficult to realise, Plato is content to outline his philosophy of the rule of law as the second best alternative. From this point of view, although the rule of reason by direct knowledge of Forms is the ideal desired, the practical focus of the *Laws* treats right belief as an acceptable alternative to knowledge (632a, 689a-e, 684a). Indeed, there is a strong suggestion in the *Statesman* that laws are sovereign where right opinion but not wisdom is in power (301a9-b). The law, therefore, rests on the insight and wisdom - which would then amount to no more than right belief - of the old, experienced persons constituting the Council; or (c) Plato has stopped believing that knowledge of Forms is sufficient for virtue; or (d) Forms in the *Laws*, as in the late dialogues, mean something different from what they mean in the middle period.

Wherever the truth lies in these possibilities or any others is difficult to say. However that may be, Plato cannot both claim at the same time that law is the rule of reason *and* that the operation of law in the political sphere is second-best. A way round this is that Plato's concept of perfection accommodates degrees of approximation. This may well be true. For in *Laws* x,

the supreme rationality of Soul is said to be lawful. And the life of reason exhibited by Soul is the standard for human and other lives. Consequently, even correct political laws are not identical with but are only approximations of the perfect law of Reason-in-motion. Likewise, if the distinction between knowledge (of Forms) and true opinion is still valid in the *Laws*, there must be a difference in quality between the rule of law by reason that knows Forms and the rule of law by reason that has true opinion. This will imply that there are acceptable gradations below the perfect standard of virtue expressed by Reason-in-motion. This is also suggested by the passage of *R*. 500d already mentioned, according to which the lover of wisdom associating with the divine order will himself become orderly and divine *in the measure permitted to man.* That this may well be the case is reinforced by the following argument.

At *Phil.* 33b10, it is said that it is improper to suppose that gods enjoy pleasure or its opposite. The same doctrine is intimated in the *Epinomis* (985a) where it is said that the truly divine is above pleasure and pain. But insofar as our embodiment is concerned, we shall be able to pursue the life of virtue only if it is pleasurable. Thus although pleasure is not the Good, it is a necessary condition for human life. Virtue is valuable in itself because it is the life of reason, but the virtuous life is possible for human beings only to the extent that they can take pleasure in virtue (*Laws* 663b; cf. 733a; 732). In the *Republic*, Socrates argues that justice is intrinsically preferable to injustice (444e-445b), and then that the life of the just man is more truly pleasant (580c-587c). In the *Philebus*, Plato indicates that

pleasure is an essential ingredient of the Good but it is by no means the most important, nor the one which really makes life good (20c-23a, 64b-67b). Both dialogues appear to imply that pleasure is not the same as the Good, and that an intrinsically good life is not the same as a pleasurable one. So although, the life of god is described as *supremely* good, virtuous and happy, being a life that approximates most closely to pure Reason, the virtue or goodness of a man who embodies reason is not of the same degree. There is an acceptable degree of virtue permitted to man.

If am anywhere near the mark, then, politically, the rule of law arising from right belief may lead to a degree of goodness or happiness of the city as a whole, while that arising from knowledge may lead to a greater degree of goodness. Compare in this regard, Plato's ranking of States and constitutions as best, second and third, in order of decreasing perfection or goodness (*Laws* 739). Again in the *Laws*, e.g., there is no explicit reference to the kind of virtue which, according to the *Republic*, can be achieved by the philosopher who apprehends the Good. On the other hand, the kind of virtue described in the *Laws* resembles that expected of the second-class citizens in the *Republic*. Their virtue consists in their capacity to maintain throughout all temptation, the principles which one has been taught in youth (412c-414a). This, of course, does not require knowledge. True belief acquired through right education is enough. In the *Republic*, the virtue and happiness of citizens in the ideal State arise from the efficient performance of their specialised skills and the effective contribution to the satisfaction

of the needs of the State as a whole. As between the political classes in the ideal State, however, the virtue and happiness of the philosopher who knows the Good would be on a higher level than that of the carpenter in the third class (581cff.). Citizens of the lower classes act virtuously, not out of insight into the Good, but by the unconscious influences they have been brought up in, and by obeying the rule of those who have that insight. It seems to be suggested in the *Laws* too that the citizens can be virtuous if only their desires or passions are disciplined in such a way that they obey the law as a matter of habit. It is generally assumed that in practice, the virtuous will act, not on his own insight into the foundations of good and evil, into the one and the many, but in accordance with the law which rests on the insight and wisdom of the old and experienced.

The upshot of all this is that, there is an objective standard of goodness or happiness, and that it is our function to aspire to this standard by education and/or genuine legislation. We must devise social and educational institutions or constitutions, and promote kinds of activities with the sole purpose of facilitating the rule of reason or law or, in other words, with the purpose of bringing our passions or desires into conformity with the dictates of our reason. In such institutions or constitutions and activities not only shall we approximate to the supreme goodness or happiness of a star-god, but also, presumably, we shall attain acceptable degree(s) of happiness or goodness permitted to our mortality, in our social and political roles. Our efforts in these directions may ensure that we are not carelessly given to evil in our lives and this may be enough to spare us a series of transmigrations, and secure, at death, our spiritual (*re*-) union

with our native star (*R*. 613a-b with *Ti*. 42). I turn, finally, to the third question I raised; in what consists knowledge of Forms? It is noteworthy that Plato often correlates knowledge of Forms with grasping the truth. And although a truth is not the same as a Form, the following account suggests that Plato seems to think that to know the Form of anything (x) is to possess the truth about it, and this further means the ability to give a *final explanation* of why "x" is what it is.

(3) Plato seems to argue that in knowing Forms we become aware of our deepest essence, which is a kind of self-knowledge - call it rational self-knowledge. This kind of self-knowledge is mediated by the intermediary levels through which we come to apprehend Forms. Since god-souls are imbued with Forms, this implies that divine knowledge involves *direct* rational self-knowledge.[52] Rational self-knowledge involves two legs which are respectively accounted for below: (i) the fundamental assumption or doctrine, often not made explicit though it is there all the same, that the same intelligible principles which govern and determine the structure of the cosmos are also imprinted in our souls; (ii) the consequence that in trying to know Forms or in

[52] The earliest intimation of mediated self-knowledge is in the Socratic dialogue, *Lysis*, where the theme of friendship serves as the starting point for the study of self-knowledge. Plato argues that we love a friend because of something good in him. But we often desire one good thing in view of another. Hence, in order to arrive at the foundation of our friendship, there must be a first object of friendship (219c-d). In the last part of the dialogue, it is argued that we desire what we do not possess and what is lacking (221e). To be deficient in something means to be deprived of something which is proper (*oikeion*) to us. For this very reason one desires a friend in order to be fully oneself, and friends are by nature proper to us (*phusei pōi oikeioi*, 221e). Thus he implies that friendship leads to one's essential nature, and to contact with the Good.

trying to study the governing principles of the cosmos, we are thereby coming to know our essential nature.

(i) The assumption that the same fundamental principles which govern the cosmos are imprinted in our souls appear in many forms in different contexts and in many dialogues. But I shall be selective here. The most explicit formulation of this doctrine appears in the *Timaeus*, where Plato represents the fundamental structure of the soul as mathematically constituted by the Forms of Being, Sameness, and Difference, the same principles which govern the soul of the cosmos. Although the representation is mythical, myths are not vacuous. Plato is accounting for a belief, that our *a priori* capacity to know that this *is* one, or that this is the *same as* or *different from* that other, etc. is to be explained by assuming that our souls are imbued with Forms or essences (*ousiai*). This is intimated earlier in the Recollection thesis:...'every soul has, *by reason of her nature*, had contemplation of reality' (*ta onta*, *Phdr.* 249e). But if, as I have suggested earlier on, Platonic philosophical "contemplation" is a quality of life rather than "spectatoral" observation of something completely external to oneself, the possibility of Recollecting Forms already implies the innatist doctrine of the *Timaeus*. This is also suggested in two ways by the *Theaetetus*.

First, *at Theae.* 49aff., we learn that "Socratic midwifery", if successful, results in the "psychic" birth of wisdom. But, of course, this is impossible unless the patient is himself pregnant with wisdom. Since to be wise is to know Forms or essences (*ousiai*), it follows that our soul is already imbued with Forms or essences. The second way relates to the more general theme of the dialogue.

The *Theaetetus* deals with a thesis of the mathematical student Theaetetus, that Knowledge is Perception. Plato restates this as equivalent to the Protagorean "man-measure" principle, and also the Heraclitean theory of flux. According to Plato, Heraclitus meant that everything is in a continual process of change, and of ever becoming other than itself. From this point of view, he tries to show that if it is true the consequence will be that nothing can exist or can be known and, in fact, no quality or quantity can remain even for a moment, and that therefore nothing can be said to be. For that which is always changing in every respect of itself cannot be known. On the other hand, from the point of view of the knower, we can neither distinguish one sensation from another nor identify it with another. The result is that even speech is impossible (183a-b). Heraclitus is refuted. 184bff. shows that sensation - but not the pure sensationalism attributed to Heraclitus - is possible but only as the basis of knowledge; the senses are only instruments through which the soul processes sense data into the contents of knowledge. Everything has an essence (*ousian*,186a2) such as Likeness and Unlikeness, Identity and Difference, Beautiful and Ugly, Good and Bad, Hardness and Softness (186a5-b5). It is the essential nature [of things], and the fact that they exist (*kai ho ti eston*) and their opposition to one another, and in turn, the essential nature of this opposition, that the soul itself tries to determine for us by comparing them with one another (b4-c). Knowledge is not in the sensations, but in the process of *reasoning* about them, since the latter but not the former makes it possible to grasp the truth (*alētheias*) and essences (*ousias*, d1-5). That the soul grasps essences, Likeness and Unlikeness, Good and Bad, etc., *by reasoning* about things,

suggests that the soul is in essential relation to intelligible essences, and in some relation to sensibles.

The *Parmenides* carries this further and suggests that intelligible Forms and sensibles would not be epistemically complete without an essential mediatory role of soul. The argument begins with special reference to the problem of the One and the Many. Plato begins the discussion by doubting the cheap eristic tricks of the Sophists and the rhetoricians who prove that the one is also many by pointing out that the same individual has many parts or attributes inspite of his identity. The crux of the one-many relation, he argues, relates rather to how the Form of Unity, Like or Motion, etc. may also be respectively Plurality, Unlike or Rest, etc. - objects which we apprehend in reasoning, 128e6-130a4). The dialogue proceeds to show that the result at which Socrates would wonder so much cannot actually be realised, if (a) Forms are viewed as abstract universals, and (b) we follow out the hypothesis of the existence and of the non-existence of the One and the Many in all the various senses in which the hypothesis can be taken.

First, Plato shows that if the Forms are taken as common elements in various particulars, and yet at the same time as independent substances, there will be insoluble difficulties: there would have to be a Form for every sensible - hair, mud, dirt, etc.(130c). Further, what could be meant by saying that the many things "participate" in Forms? Does "participate" involve sharing in the Form as a whole or as part? (131a). As an abstract and independent substance a Form would be like a sail drawn over many objects (131b), and it would be impossible that it should be

wholly in each of the things that participate in them. Yet, it would be absurd to suppose that it was divided among them; for in that case, a Form would cease to be a single thing, and would thus be meaningless. On the other hand, if a Form were to correspond merely to the common element in many particular objects which, in other respects, are different from each other, it would not be essentially related to these objects but only accidentally present in them. Or, if it were essentially bound up with them, then, it must be through some third form (132a). Yet again, if that third Form were only a common element in the first Form and the particulars brought under it, it would only be accidentally related to both and a fresh Form would be required to establish the connexion between them, and so on *ad infinitum*.[53] The result is the same if we suppose that a Form is a paradigm fixed in the nature of things, the other things being images or likenesses thereof (132d). For, if likeness requires a Form to explain it, we again fall back into the same regress *ad infinitum*. The conclusion, then, is that nothing could be explained by taking Forms to be abstract universals or common elements *in* particular things.

But still more important is the relation of Form to soul. If Forms were taken as objective principles complete in themselves apart from any relation to our thought, Plato argues that they would be nothing for us. They would be completely transcendent and removed from our consciousness. Any consciousness that grasps them would have no community with our souls (133b-135b2). But also we cannot take Forms merely as our thoughts which as

[53] This is the Third Man Argument so often mentioned by Aristotle who takes no notice of the discussions in the *Parmenides*.

such exist in our souls. For otherwise they would be nothing but thoughts, and all things will think, since they participate in thought (132c). Since Forms cannot be taken as concepts existing in our minds, i.e., as universal abstractions, nor yet as entities existing in absolute independence of mind, we are left to draw two conclusions: that (i) insofar as we know anything by Forms, they are, *in a sense* (though not by likeness)[54] in the objects known through them (see 133a-135b6-c4); (ii) the distinction between thought and being, between soul and Forms, must be regarded as a distinction between principles which imply each other. A somewhat similar conclusion is reached in the *Sophist* where it is carried a step further.

In the *Sophist*, the consequences of pure sensationalism of the Heraclitean type and the objective idealism of the Eleatic One are drawn, with emphasis on the latter. The assertion of absolute unity of Being, insofar as such assertion admits of no difference of aspects, makes it impossible to say anything about it. Even to affirm that "the One is", implies some distinction between the subject and the predicate,[55] whereas bare identity means nothing at all. Similarly, it is impossible to give meaning to a permanence which is without change, movement or activity. Nor can absolute motion without rest be conceivable except that which combines motion and rest. *Being*, then - it is concluded - *is something else in the soul*...in as much you think rest and

[54] The *Parmenides* is not arguing that sensible features do not resemble intelligble Forms - which would contradict the *Timaeus'* narrative according to which the cosmos is a likeness of the Form of Animal. It is only arguing that it is not in virtue of likeness that sensible features participate in intelligible Forms.

[55] Cf. *Parm.*, 142bff.

motion are embraced by it and you comprehend and observe that they participate in existence, you therefore say that they are' (250b). Thus Being and Becoming are related; but their relation has its completeness in an intelligence - the soul.[56]

(ii) If the foregoing intimate the *Timaeus'* doctrine that Forms are imprinted in the soul, and constitute the fundamental nature of the soul as of the cosmos, a consquence would be that coming to know Forms is coming to know your own essential self, since Plato identifies the self with the soul. Thus in *Alcibiades* 1 - if authentically Plato's - it is argued that man is not wholly identical with his body, soul being the dominant part (130d). Now soul must look at the divine (133c) in order to know itself. Plato illustrates what he means by an example: as we see ourselves reflected in the pupil of the eye of a friend, so we learn what we are and who we are by looking at the divine or god. The doctrine presupposes the conviction that soul is akin to the divine or god, and furthermore, that a direct introspection of one's own essence is not possible. It is implied that rational self-knowledge is the terminus of a long road which man is not able to reach at once. The text (133c) asserts that when the soul thinks of god it thinks itself; the relation between god and the soul is based on the belief that *god*, from the point of view of rational self-knowledge, *is the highest clarity of thought.* This conclusion is further suggested in the *Meno.*

There, Socrates proposes to enter into an inquiry into the essence (*ousia*) of virtue with Meno. He professes ignorance of this essence and yet rejects all the "empirical" definitions which

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56 This conclusion is not meant to depreciate the objectivity of Being or Becoming.

Meno has proposed. Meno has offered as an account of virtue the relative excellence which age, sex, and social circumstances determine for each individual. For Socrates, however, the meaning of the question, What is virtue? does not require an answer that lists kinds of virtue, but a request for the single essence of virtue by or by reason of which actions/things are virtuous. As the essence required seems quite removed from the "empirical" cases of what constitutes virtue, Meno legitimately objects with the question of whether knowledge is possible. Socrates' reformulation of the objection is this: a man cannot inquire into that which he does not know; for if he knows he does not need to inquire, but if not, he cannot inquire; for he does not know the very subject about which he has to inquire (80e). This, for Socrates, is a demand to explain what is involved in knowing. Socrates' answer, half mythical, is that people who have been divinely inspired - priests, priestesses, poets - have declared that the soul is immortal, and exists in a cycle of incarnation (birth) and disincarnation (death). Having seen the things in this world (*ta enthade*) and the world beyond (*ta en hadou*) in its cycle of life, the soul has learned all things. So that it is not surprising that it can be *reminded* of virtue and other things which it knew before. Since all nature is akin, there is nothing to prevent someone, upon being reminded of one thing which men call learning, from discovering the rest, if he is courageous and does not faint in his search. For all inquiry and learning are then recollection (81a9-d).

Thus the soul, on this view, has all the truths in itself from eternity. But it has them in an implicit way. Socrates attempts to

illustrate this by the help of a slave boy whom he questions and, gradually through mere questioning, leads him to the discovery of the solution to a geometric problem, even though the boy had no previous formal training in geometry. For Plato, this is a demonstration that all the notions which were applied in the solution to the geometric problem were not mere logical presuppositions but valid intimations of knowledge of objectively existing realities or essences. Therefore, even as one does not know, yet one necessarily has true notions of what he does not know (85c). Although the soul is said to have learned all things both in this and the world beyond, this surely involves no contingent matters of fact. In the *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, Recollection (*anamnēsis*) is in connection with Forms as universal, intelligible objects of knowledge. However, Recollection introduces difficulties of interpretation. For, in Plato, poetry and philosophy are often indistinguishable. Is Recollection, then, a mere metaphor or something else? If a metaphor, it would seem to imply, in the light of the geometric exercise, that learning (i.e., knowing Forms) involves bringing to self-consciousness the universal principles which underlie the manifold particulars of our phenomenal world. In learning, therefore, we are not imprinting raw data on an otherwise blank soul. Rather we are engaged in a process of realising our innate capacity to grasp first principles. This metaphorical reading, however, is compatible with the more traditional interpretation according to which Recollection is knowledge grounded on objective, independently existing, *essences* (or Forms) which are in one-to-one correspondence to their reminders in phenomena. Since first principles are akin or are in necessary interconnection, we can be

brought (perhaps by our own efforts or though Socratic midwifery), to a complete insight into the whole system of *first principles*, somewhat in the same sense in which the interconnectedness of the *a priori* notions in the geometric solution were brought to some kind of self-consciousness of the boy.

The *Meno*'s "solution" to the question of how we come to know has the consequence of correcting the sharp division between knowledge and ignorance drawn in the early Socratic dialogues. The state of mind called opinion, or sense-perception, is now to be viewed as a necessary step which grounds a rite of passage to essences. And we see that the interrelationships of our concepts are valid intimations of the system of objective realities which the soul is imbued with. Consequently, knowledge (of essence) is defined as "tethering" or "stablising" opinion by accounting for the cause (*aitias logismõi*, 97e-98a) - which suggests that knowledge of essences is not so much an acquaintance-like awareness of some object as the *reasoned awareness* of the cause or principle of the things or actions. True opinion, then, is not a falsehood which fails to apprehend the truth. It simply does not consist in the *final* explanation of nature in its necessary interconnections. The *Meno*, then, implies the conclusion that starting from sensible reminders, the soul, by going deeper and deeper into itself in reasoning, brings into self-consciousness (remembrance) *essences* of phenomena.

In the *Phaedrus*, we learn that by seeing a beautiful object the soul is reminded of true beauty. Man has within himself an element of this divine beauty: 'And if they have not aforetime

trodden this path, they now set out upon it learning the way from any source that may offer it or finding it for themselves; and as they follow up the trace *within themselves* of the nature of *their own god* their task is made easier in as much as they are constrained to fix their gaze upon him', i.e., a friend who is by nature disposed to the love of wisdom (252eff.). Plato intimates that by looking at a friend, by being together with a friend, *enthousiasmos* is generated which involves a concentration of the soul upon itself. This process is qualified as taking place in Recollection. At 253a-b, he points out that the lover tries to create in the beloved the greatest possible likeness with *his own* god. It would follow that the beloved is not a complete likeness, but helps to evoke in the lover the latter's likeness with god, which he then wants to create in the beloved. But if this takes place in Recollection, it is all the more important: for the "*recollective*" recreation of the god within us through the image of the beloved is a process towards the highest clarity of thought.

In the text of *Ti.* 37a-c, Plato assigns to the human soul a natural movement which imitates that of Soul; Soul revolves upon itself (*aute te anakukloumenē pros hautēn*). In this process, revolving Soul comes into contact with the objects of its thought and pronounces in which respect and how things are the same and different. He then intimates that the object known is recognised *as part of oneself* or as agreeing with part of one's own being: 'But when reason is concerned with the rational, and the circle of the same moving smoothly declares it, then intelligence and knowledge are necessarily achieved. And if anyone affirms that in which these two are found *to be other than the soul*, he will

say the very opposite of the truth' (37c). At 90a-d, Plato speaks of the task man has to cherish "the divine part within himself". The best part of man, reason, is akin to the heavens. By studying the thoughts and movements of the celestial bodies, man nourishes his soul and according to its original nature makes it into a likeness of that which is thought (90d). Thus it can be said that by contemplating the intelligible to which it is akin, reason comes to know itself, and actualizes in clarity the deepest essence of its nature.

In the *Epinomis*, astromonical studies are recommended as leading to true wisdom. At 987d-988b, the Athenian expresses the hope that the Greeks will learn better the true cult of the divine celestial bodies than the non-Greeks from whom they first learned it. The Greeks should avail themselves of the oracle of Delphi and while obedient to their laws not think that it is forbidden to study the celestial bodies. Deity (*to theion*, 988a) is not ignorant of human nature. If deity guides man and teaches him, man will follow and will learn number and counting. If God would not know this, he would not know himself. God, then, knows himself and therefore he looks down with favour on the man who studies the celestial bodies, because this study brings man closer to God. Man must therefore strive for self-knowledge. He does so when he desires to know the principles which govern the celestial bodies.

From these texts, Plato gives the impression that for him rational self-knowledge is the fulfillment of human knowledge, and that this is attainable in the highest clarity of thought. Consequently, Forms exist as the intelligible conditions which determine and define the limits of clarity in human thought.[57] It is as

intelligible conditions that Forms are known as by vision or sudden revelation, and are known only by means of *logos* rather than by means of empirical studies. Thus in the *Phaedo*, an objection of Cebes' leads Socrates to a short intellectual biography according to which, on reading Anaxagoras' tantalising postulate that Reason is the ordering principle of all things and on finding that by the use to which Reason was put Anaxagoras was unable to free himself from the inadequacy of physical and chemical models of explanation employed by other physiologists, he (Socrates) devised his own method: that of using *logoi*[58] and postulating Forms as hypotheses. Socrates (96bff.) thinks that no other model of explanation could give a sufficient reason why when one is added to one the one to which it is added becomes two, simply by reason of the addition, or that a flower is beautiful because of its shape, blooming, pigments (100d), etc., or that "A" is taller than "B" by a head, when a head is itself just so small (100e). Socrates was looking for an underlying principle which would make these processes and explanations both intelligible and adequate. The answer, therefore, did not lie in the factors involved in the processes. Socrates expected to get from Anaxagoras a comprehensive teleological system of the universe, which would explain all the particular aspects of existence as disposed to "the highest good" or "for the best" by reference to

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[57] Cf. *R.* 532a"...when anyone by dialectics attempts through discourse of reason and apart from all perceptions to find his way to the very essence of each thing and does not desist till he apprehends by thought itself the nature of the Good in itself, he arrives at the limit of the intelligible - *ep' autōi ginetai tōi tou noētou telei.* Cf. further, 533c9-d8)

[58] It is not easy to translate "*logoi*" here. In context, it can mean "reasons", "arguments" "theories" or "accounts". Any of these can work without damage to the argument that follows.

Reason (See further, 97e-98a)

Socrates was disappointed, however. He implies that Anaxagoras had treated the function of Reason somewhat mechanically. Socrates compares (98b3ff.) Anaxagoras to a person who, having began by maintaining that Reason is the cause of Socrates' actions, when he tried to expound the cause of Socrates' action went on to give a lecture on the physiological detail of Socrates' posture, assigning ten thousand causes of the physiological kind. He omits the "true cause" which is that the Athenians had thought it fit to condemn Socrates, and he in turn had thought it better to remain in prison. Indeed, Socrates agrees that he could not execute his purposes without muscles, bones, sinews, and other bodily parts. But to say that he executes his purposes because of them, and that this is the manner in which the mind acts and not from his choice of the best, is a very careless and idle mode of speaking. In other words, a *true* cause must be a "purpose" explanation: "the Athenians *thought it fit* to condemn Socrates", "Socrates *thought it best* to remain..." According to Platonic science, then, sufficiency and intelligibility are the criteria for a scientifically credible explanation. Socrates' rejection of chemical and mechanical explanations seems to be because they never lead to the final explanation of things. There is a logical gap between mechanical and chemical causes on the one hand, and *final* causes on the other,[59] such that however farther and farther the former were carried, they would not end in the latter. Socrates implies that the attempt to explain the causes of his prison

[59] If Aristotle's distinctions of causes apply to Plato at all, a final cause is, for Plato, at once also a formal and efficient, though never a material cause.

situation by mechanical/chemical causes would lead to an infinite regress, and that sufficient explanations are final causes of the rational or purposive kind. By resorting to *logoi* and Forms as hypotheses, he implies that Forms perform this purposive or teleological role in the cosmos, and that *logoi* are the route to Forms.

In the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, philosophical vision of Forms is likened to a sublime mystery equivalent to religious initiation. At *Symp.* 210eff., Diotima speaks of the final phase of Socrates' initiation into the mysteries of Love as a sudden beholding of something wonderful, i.e., divine beauty itself - suggesting a comparison with the *epopteia* of the Eleusinian mysteries. Consequently, although the philosophical *logos* functions as a rite of passage to the vision of Forms, Forms themselves are not something uttered (*logoumenon*). There is a distinction between the Form itself and the *logos* which refers to it. The mortal human being makes his approach to divine reality through the *logos*, but the Forms themselves transcend human, linguistic grasp. Socratic philosophy is an attempt to develop one's powers of discerning intellectually those universal forms common to all the various instances and to fix habitually one's vision of them as the firm foundation for the life of *aretē*. The means of accomplishing this was *dialegein*, discussion of a certain rigorous sort by use of *logoi*. However, Socratic forms are not linguistic entities, nor concepts but extra-linguistic realities *inherent in* things or persons, and which words ultimately name. In the middle period, Forms are present in, are participated in by, communicate with, or are the causes of, sensible things.[60] But

60 See *Phdo.* 100c; *Parm.* 129a; *Eud.* 280b2; *Ly.* 216d4; *Phil.* 16b2; *R.*

the existential status of Forms is *meta*physical, and therefore Forms are not coeval or co-extensive with what they are causes of or explain. From this point of view, the *Symposium* qualifies the apprehension of the Form of beauty as neither *logos* nor *epistēmē* (211a).[61] Beauty is apprehended in a quasi-mystical, but nonetheless, intellectual vision, which is beyond all language and discursive thought. In another dimension - reference to the *Republic* - knowledge of the Good is a synoptic vision, a seeing how the various specific goods of life are to be ordered hierarchically into a harmonious whole. The vision of the Good is the seeing of all the separate goods of life - appetitive, spirited, rational, in a single systematic, and integral vision of life. Thus although the vision of the Form is attained through words, it is not simply conveyed in words. Words are at the sametime the necessary means whereby the vision of the Form is attained and, as it were, the limit or barrier which needs to be transcended in

507d12; *Meno* 70a3, *Soph.* 247a8; *G.* 560d3; *Theae.* 158c2.

61 A text of the *Seventh Letter* (342a-343a) distinguishes five levels of knowledge, the first three of which are means of acquiring knowledge - viz., "a name" (*onoma*), "a description" (*logos*), "an image" (*eidōlon*); the fourth is "a knowledge (*epistēmē*) of the object"; the fifth is "the actual object of knowledge which is a true reality (*auto to gnōston kai alēthos on*). Plato then sets forth that *epistēmē*, *nous alēthēs* and *doxa* are on the fourth level (342c); of these three types of knowledge *nous* is by kinship and resemblance closest to the fifth. In this enumeration, Plato sees a continuity between knowledge in the knowing agent and the object of knowledge; *nous* is the comprehensive grasp of the intelligible. Yet, there is a higher level of knowledge than this full understanding (343d). It is tempting to read in this text the possibility that at the highest level the distinction between knowledge and its object vanishes. This strengthens our earlier observation that Forms and (pure) Reason (*nous*) are possibly obverse sides of the same coin, or that Reason is the subjective aspect of Forms. Analytically, Plato needs a distinction, but not an identity, of Forms and Reason.

rational vision.[62]

So far, we have seen that Platonic gods are motion-gods. But the divine motion is neither physical nor chemical, although it is the cause of these latter. Further, divine motion exhibits the properties of Forms - uniqueness, order, uniformity, timelessness, goodness, virtue, etc. Platonic piety, therefore, consists in attempts to reproduce divine motion in our souls (as *per* the late dialogues) or (- in words consistent with the Middle dialogues -) it consists in the knowledge of Forms. Either way, religiosity is by way of *logoi*, rather than empirical studies, although, in a truly

62 This Platonic concept of philosophical *logos* rests on a logically prior assumption about the nature of language and its relationship to reality - an assumption common to Greek culture, viz., that words are names (or signs) and that their function is to name or signify some extra-liguistic reality. This conception of words *as* names implies that realities are intelligible for what they are independently of the human language. This is evident from the then current *nomos-phusis* debate on names (*onomata*). Given the conception of language as a system of names, the question naturally arise whether the word signifies a thing by a natural rightness (*phusis*, *orthotēs*), or whether it does so simply as a matter of arbitrary convention (*nomos*). But to ask whether the name fitted or matched the nature of the thing presupposes that the nature is somehow already intelligible in itself. The *Cratylus*' discussion of "names" is instructive in this respect. Both nature and convention theories are explored dialectically to the point where each theory breaks down to absurdities. Having reached the conclusion that neither theory is sufficient by itself to account for the relation of words to the objects named or signified, Socrates states his firm conviction that, whichever theory is ultimately true, things may be known in and by themselves (*auta di' auton*, 438e7; *di' auton*, 439a6) without names; names are no sure guide to the truth of things (438d7-8); names are ultimately irrelevant to inquiry into real things (*ta onta*, 439b5), into absolute beauty or good, or any other absolute existences (439c8-d1). Thus for Plato (or Socrates), *logoi* (or more properly, *onomata*) refer to (i.e., name, signify) forms, yet at the same time the forms transcend human language.

just State those incapable of religion by philosophical *logos* can avail themselves of the direct rule of reason or, as second-best, of the rule of law. Thus it seems that Platonic piety does not accommodate the personal religion of the traditional vein. The cultic conception of god in the traditional religious sense involves a person with whom other persons may have intimate religious contact. Plato's motion-gods appear to have very little to do directly in terms of interpersonal relationship with man. The personality or impersonality of Plato's god is expressed in the rationality, proportions and rythms of the astronomical motions of the heavenly bodies. Yet Plato is prepared to assign the names of the traditional gods to his planetary gods, to call philosophical studies the true "initiation", and to describe the vision of Forms as the "true mysteries". The question arises: how does Plato convince himself that he has provided an adequate substitution of traditional religion, Olympian or Eleusinian? In particular, given the basic nature of god as a "motion of Reason", how does Plato satisfy himself that such a god cares for or is interested in human affairs? How may such a god be said to dispense divine justice? And what follows from a failure to avail oneself of (i) the philosophical *logos* by way of grasping Forms or (ii) the direct rule of reason or the rule of law in a just State? I discuss these questions below.

5 Divine justice, Providence, Eschatology, and Evil

Plato seems to say that God's presence in the universe provides a providential framework of care for our desires, hopes and destiny. God's care arises by (i) definition of "his" nature as a causal power

which is essentially good, together with the Platonic assumption that the product of that which is good is necessarily good (*Ti.* 30a); and (ii) the just administration of all things. (i) and (ii) cannot be discussed in absolute separation, since God's causality and goodness is shown in the just arrangement of all things and vice versa.

Plato (*R.* ii 377c-iii) seeks to guarantee the essential goodness of gods by the changelessness and perfection of their character. So he excludes change of shape from the concept of god and also declares that ignorance, lies, and all manner of deception are unworthy of divine beings. The gods are said to be in the most perfect state and there is nothing they do not already possess by virtue of their very nature. Since god's status is best, it is absurd to suppose that "he" will give it up. Ignorance too, cannot possibly have a place in the concept of god, since ignorance will impair the fullness of their virtue and excellent goodness.[63] In addition, the self-control of god is complete. The gods can neither indulge in such undignified laments as in Homer, nor abandon themselves to unrestrained laughter. They will be superior to sexual passions, and they cannot be swayed by bribes or persuasion.[64] In *Laws* x, it is argued that to be so swayed implies ignorance, inability or vice - characteristics which do not enter the definition of god as motion of Reason (901eff.) Reason in the gods will also be in

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[63] That god should be simple, constant and unchanging seems to be the ground of its essential goodness. Note that "simplicity", constancy", and "unchangeability" are formal properties of Forms too. For Plato virtue or goodness is a unity and a kind of order, and therefore every virtue can be set up as constituted by one form whereas vice is manifold and disorder.

[64] The belief that the gods can be squared is, in *Laws* x, the third of the beliefs which the impious hold. To suppose that they can be deflected from their responsibilities by bribery is to rate them lower than sheep-dogs.

undisputed command; and the relation between reason and desire will correspond to the ideal condition of the soul which we find described in *R.* iv. By these remarks Plato seeks to demonstrate at least, that irrationality, arbitrariness, moral perversion, and anthropomorphism are not part of the essential nature of god.

Do the gods care for mankind? In *Laws* x, Plato argues to answer a hypothetical argument of the atheist and impious, that (a) gods do not exist, that (b) even if they exist, they do not care for us, reference to the apparent lack of justice in the world which is evidenced by the prosperity and apparent happiness of the wicked, or that (c) gods can be squared. (a) and (c) have been touched on above. In answer to (b) it is pointed out (903b-d) that God takes care of everything including human beings; that men are the possessions of the gods,[65] and that the gods would not therefore neglect them, since they have the administration of all things "as their proper and becoming task" (900d). In the *Epinomis* and *Timaeus*, we learn that the primacy of rational self-movement in the cosmos explains the possibility of generation, growth and destruction of all things including the food we eat. Also, the triumphant rationality of the god-souls in their heavenly circuits enables our god-endowed capacity to understand and compute with standards of intelligibility provided by the celestial clocks from which derive the number series, standards of time, the seasons, calendar, etc (990b; *Ti* 38c, 39b-c) and above all, a standard of life exhibited by starry behaviour. Still, since no personal relationship in the traditional sense is asserted between gods and men, the gods may be said to be

[65] *Laws* 644d-e; 803-4, 902b-c; 906a. This doctrine was proclaimed earlier in the *Phaedo* (62b6)

unconcerned with human affairs. But this is not true; the gods have every trivial thing for their attention. Knowing all things, they must know that details matter (902c-903a; cf. *Critias* 109b): there are divine monitors of every detail of whatever we do or suffer (*Laws*, 903b-d; *Ti* .41d-e)

Why then do the wicked prosper? To this the Stranger in the *Laws* replies (903bff.) that the aim which "the King" set himself in his divine government is the 'preservation and virtue of the whole', and that each of us, as a part of the cosmos, is oriented to the happiness or spiritual well-being, (*eudaimonia*, c6) of the whole for which the part exists. We exist for the whole as *dramatis personae:* we are role-players in the cosmos, and our duty is to play our roles well (803c-804b). The cosmos being an orderly system, not a sphere in which anything may come out of anything, the system of divine government is simple: each man is assigned the station appropriate to his character at any given period of his life, and in this station suffers his just reward, that of associating with others like himself. In the case of the wicked this amounts to punishment. The punishment of the wicked whose prosperity is a scandal to the pious is to be found in the friends they make. Both on earth and between each of our lives things are so disposed that as a man desires to live, so he finds his appropriate station, and he suffers in that station his appropriate treatment from those who share in it with him. The objective at which this aims is the maximisation of the triumph of virtue and the defeat of vice in the cosmos as a whole. It is implied, then, that a man's prosperity is not to be assessed by the quantity and variety of material goods he enjoys, but by the status and

circumstances of his soul's existence.

It is not Plato's view, then, that the gods actually direct our actions. Nor does he suggest that they give us our deserts before our life is completed. Plato seems to set human life in a global system in which the good and evil have impersonal logical-ontological functions. This refers to the fact that the basis of Plato's assertion that divine justice and providence watch over every individual's life and take notice of his action is in his teleological concept of of the cosmos.[66] In Plato's theory of motion, that which is moved is determined, while we, as participants in rational self-motion, are self-determined. Consequently, everyman lives as he wishes (903d5). Globally, the rationality of the motions of Soul, and the essential goodness of Reason ensure that the lasting geometric and mathematically expressible laws of the cosmos provide a cosmic virtue that does not admit any arbitrary intervention - e.g., thunderbolts from Zeus. *Ad hoc* interventions would be necessary for the preservation of virtue only in a disorderly world. In the *Philebus* (28d), we are assured that the sum of things - what we call the universe - is controlled not by a power which is irrational, blind, or by mere chance, but by Reason and a wondrous regulating Intelligence. Thus, in an orderly world such as ours

[66] Plato does not fall into a fallacy of composition here; he does not mean that what is good for the whole is also good for the individual (903c). This would be a fallacy if he had argued, "if the whole is happy then the individual is happy". But there is no such arguing in the *Laws*, only a doctrinaire assertion that the arrangements in the cosmos were so desired and designed by God that the happiness of the individual is in the happiness of the whole. So too the *Republic*: the happiness of the individual citizen consists in his effective contribution, according to his mettle, to the virtue and happiness of the whole polity (*R.* 419-420c).

things have been so arranged that wickedness is self-thwarting through the punishments and frustrations which the wicked inflict on each other. Again, in the *Philebus* (30b) God has so disposed of things that the resulting fairness of the cosmos constitutes a system which self-corrects physical disequilibria and psychic injustices. At *Laws* 715-16, it is said that god's ways are "according to nature", and divine vengeance consists only in the fact that the wicked man is "deprived of gods", so that disasters which overtake him are not to be ascribed to them.

After dealing with the intellectual roots of impiety, the Athenian in the *Laws* proposes appropriate sentences for the punishment of its fruits, and proceeds to an act which prohibits all private places of worship, the punishment for grave sentences being death. The reason for this severity is that the common tendency of men in bad or good fortune to invent private religious observances encourages the belief that however wicked one is, it will always be possible to find means of propriation. Private cults, in fact, militate against the truimph of cosmic virtue; for the parts are not there for their own good nor is the whole for the good of the parts, but the parts are there for the whole, and the only criterion by which we should judge the fate and the experience of the parts is their contribution or lack of it to the perfection of the whole. God does not concern itself with physical or material things but with soul alone.[67] To treat souls according to their quality and their merits and to give them a status corresponding to the degree of their goodness is the only function suitable for god in the cosmos in which the absolute priority of Soul in every respect has been proved and the good Soul has been shown to be

[67] See esp. 903dff.

in power. Man's own wish or choice or his reaction to the influences of other souls determines his status.[68] By what looks like a law of psychic gravitation and attraction worthier souls will rise to the astral areas, while those of the opposite will sink downwards to *Hades* or even deeper (904b-e). Thus providence manifests itself in the very arrangement of the cosmos, and in the care and just administration of the universe of souls.

For Plato, however, divine care and just administration of all things, in the teleological scheme in which they are exercised, is consistent with the existence of evil. In the *Republic*, in a preamble to a curriculum for the education of the young, Plato intimates that a good god will be just, harmonious and peaceful, and not revengeful. Nor can god wantonly do harm to anyone. That is, he cannot, by definition of "his" nature, be said to be responsible for any harm to man. It is consistent with the supreme goodness of god to effect only the well-being of all other creatures, and to cause only what is pleasant and good in human experience. God is not the cause of everything, certainly not of evil, but only of what is good.[69] For misfortunes and sufferings, a different cause will have to be found. Or rather a deeper understanding of the function of misfortunes in human life may reveal that there are blessings and benefits for the truly important phases of human existence even in what seems an unmitigated evil.[70] Plato is here more anxious to absolve the gods from the responsibility for evil, and to confine their

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[68] 903d5, 904bff., d4ff.

[69] 'It is neither useful nor true to talk of the gods as a source of evil' (*R.* 380b-c; cf. 386c)

[70] See *R* 379c-380c.

treatment of man to the production of what is good. The fact that good men fare badly while the bad do well is no conclusive proof against either the existence of gods or their benevolent care of men.

But at *Theae.* 176a, Socrates tells Theodorus; 'Evil can never be done away with, for the good must always have its contrary'. Plato's language seems sometimes, as in the *Phaedo*, to equate evil with body, and sometimes - which is the interpretation I favour - to make body the condition of evil (since generally, moral values are a property of the soul). Whatever the correct interpretation, since body does not depend for its existence on Soul or Reason, it follows that evil or the condition of evil can never be done away with. A soul is evil or bad in proportion to the amount of irrationality it is subject to; and body is an irreducible condition of irrationality. In the *Laws*, Reason succeeds in its purposes by furnishing the universe with a virtuous, happy soul. In associating with Reason, Soul controls all things to a right and happy end (897b). In the *Philebus* Reason is in control of the cosmos. In the *Timaeus* Reason's power is checked by (material) Necessity which it persuades and adapts to its teleological purposes. The bodily elements have their own tendencies. But in the cosmos their nature and tendency are nothing but the geometrical structure of their respective atoms, and constructive Reason appears in the final analysis to be responsible for their reaction. For divine Reason works for the *best*, and part of the providential programme consists in bestowing definite atomic shapes on body. These shapes are not randomly chosen at all; they are the most regular and most beautiful that exist.[71] And it is for the best possible perfection

of the whole that they were so constructed.

The phase of nature in which the two broad antagonistic elements - Reason and Necessity - conspicuously meet, is man. Man has been created, not immediately by the Demiurge, but by subordinate gods who are his helpers and the executors of his intentions. Into his nature has gone, on the one hand, a particle of soul, homogeneous with that mathematically constructed and completely harmonious substance of which Soul was made. On the other hand, there are the mortal parts of soul which are the seat of passions, emotions and the like, as also his flesh, bones, muscles, blood and all else that belong to his physical nature. The physical part has been created out of the four elements. Thus their experiences and reactions will be determined by the same laws to which the physical elements are subject everywhere.

Physical necessity also determines sense perception. These perceptions are likely to affect man and to disturb the normal and desirable working of the better part - the divine part of his soul.[72] With respect to his appetites and desires, the organs ministering to them have been carefully placed in those parts of the body where they are held in check by others more immediately under the control of Reason. Yet all these inferior parts may gain strength at the expense of his nobler part. Other adverse effects may be reproduced by physical sufferings, or by any kind of short-comings or affectation of body. But goodness is in accordance with divine Reason working for the perfection that human souls should be treated according to their deserts, and that a correspondence should be effected between their nature and the

[71] See 53b; 53d-e; also 56cff.

[72] 42a; 43a-44c; 86b-87b; Cf. 69cff.

circumstances of their outward existence.[73] So in the creation of the human body, it has been possible, and care has been taken that it should work no more harm than is inevitable. This view largely determines the parts of our animal structure; the location of the organs, and their function. According to the *Timaeus*, then, God's goodness accounts for the presence of Soul, determines the shape of the cosmos as a whole and the particulars in it, certain important features in the physics of the heaven, the number and quantitative relation of the elements from which the parts of the universe are made, and finally, the shape, location, and function of the various organs of the body.

Plato speaks of diseases of the soul caused by the state of the body (86b). But man, fortunately, is also susceptible to influences of another and better kind - such as the philosophical contemplation of the order of the universe, astronomical studies, and the harmony of music. These better influences tend to strengthen the part of the individual soul which is akin and homogeneous to the soul of the cosmos. Thus man may be a servant of his physical nature, or he may rise above purely physical necessity, and within the limits of his individual capacities contribute to the victory of Reason over material Necessity, if he makes the best use of the divine particle in him.[74]

Justice in the care of the gods extends to eschatology. What we call death is, for Plato, simply the *dissociation* of soul from its embodiment,[75] while soul itself cannot possibly die.[76] In the

[73] See 42aff., 45aff., 69d; 70a; and esp. 71aff.

[74] 86b-89c; 89d-90d

[75] *Ti.*81d-e; *Phdo.*65c-d, 67c-d, 83a-b

Epinomis (986c-d), we observe that those who, during mortal life endeavour to reproduce in their soul the order and rhythms of the celestial movements will join in the unity of Reason after what we call death. And Plato believes that souls which fail to achieve psychic union with Reason animate a succession of different physical environments (*Phdo.* 81e; *Phdr.* 248c-249c; *Laws* 904e). This is often presented in Orphic-Pythagorean verbiage and mythology, hence Plato's language of "Hades" "abode of virtue", "purification", "initiation", "flight" of soul, etc.

The concept of a balance effected in after-life, and more generally, the doctrine of the soul's successive lives are clearly adaptations of the tenets of Greek mystery religion. Eschatological themes of the soul appear at the end of the *Gorgias*, *Republic* and *Phaedo* after logical arguments. In *Laws* x, they appear as a logical sequel to Plato's philosophical cosmology. The pure of soul will be rewarded, the impure punished. Such a creed leads to the confidence that whatever is unsatisfactory in the relationship between man's merits and his experiences in this world will be made good after his death. This belief supplies the basis for the eschatological myths in the *Gorgias* and *Phaedo*. In the *Republic*, where the general lines of the myth at the end of the book follows that in the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedo*, the primary concern is not judgement of the death but the choice that each soul has to make of its next incarnation. There are two noteworthy features. The first is the role played in the myth by Necessity and her three daughters, the Fates. Ceaselessly spinning the heavens with their hands, these grim daughters also bind upon each soul the destiny it has picked, and they allot it its

[76] *Meno* 81b-c; *R.* 610d6-611e3; *Phdr.* 245c-246a2.

daemōn to guard it and fulfil what it has chosen (cf. *Ti.*410e; *Laws*, 903b). The second feature is the warning given by the herald who supervises the souls' choices: 'the responsibility lies with you as you choose; God is not to blame' (617d-e). The point made of these two features of the myth is that the choices we make depend on our understanding of life. So that it is vital, above all things, to have knowledge of good and evil. The fates are there to symbolise the inevitability of the consequences we bring upon ourselves by our actions, and it is no doubt for the same reasons that the souls are warned that the gods are not to blame. In fact, our destinies are jointly determined by our own actions (*Laws*, 903d), and by the universal laws of the cosmos. Except insofar as God may have determined those laws no part is played by God in the whole matter. Just before the myth of the *Republic* (612-13), we read of the just or virtuous man being pleasing and of the unjust man being offensive to the gods. The just man is also a beneficiary of various other things and goods, so that he is never neglected by the gods; in disease and poverty, all things will finally prove good for him in life and in death. Thus we are remotely influenced in our individual destiny by a God who has made a general disposition of all things. Since God's dispositions are good, it follows that ultimately, it largely depends on us.

In the *Timaeus*, the immortal part of man is not a compound of fire, water, air and earth but a harmony of numbers. A theory of the morality of rewards and punishments is given in which it is meant that we bring upon ourselves our own destiny in accordance with the ineluctable laws that God has laid down when

he persuaded the primal chaos to conform as closely as it could to the eternal exemplars (41eff.). The gods who created man have done their best within the possibilities afforded by Necessity to facilitate the rule of his rational part. But whether this part which belongs in the teleological scheme or the others through which man is tied to the laws of physical Necessity will emerge superior, is left to the individual who decides in and through the course of life, and his decision will determine the status of his soul after life (90eff.).

But what, after all, does Plato mean by "after-life"? And what is Hades? Indeed Plato often uses a language of place to indicate *where* an intelligible soul or Reason (*nous*) may *see* intelligible Forms and become wise (*phronēsis/ sophia*). The soul, in dialectical studies, *takes wings* which bear it to the place of the gods where it has vision of Forms (*Phdr.* 249c, 247c-248, 246b6-d2). Forms are characterised as existing *en tōi noētoi topōi*, in an intelligible place or realm (*R.* 508c). Here, Reason (*nous*) and its intelligible objects (*to nooumena*) are contrasted with the sensible realm (*en tōi horatōi*), vision and its visibles. Below the sensible realm is "Hades". But consider *Theae.* 176a-b;

> they [sc. the evil] have no *place* in the divine world but they must need haunt *this region* of our mortal nature. This is why we should make all speed to take *flight* from this world to *the other*, and that means becoming like the divine so far as we can, and that again is to become holy with wisdom.

Clearly, Plato identifies "there" (*ekeise*) - the place of the gods, as opposed to "here" - the place of mortals, with becoming good and with the condition of becoming piously wise. At *Ti.* 62cff. (with 32cff.), e.g., he argues that the cosmos is a globe comprising every

atmosphere and condition, and that there is no reality corresponding to "up and down", which really belongs to the language of perceptual relativity. That is, the astronomical heavens may be *above* us, but it does not follow that there is an *above* and *below*, a *here* or *there* simpliciter in our circular cosmos, independently of a perceiver. The physical trappings of their conception notwithstanding, Forms, although objective, are bodiless, unextended, and are therefore not locatable entities as such. Consequently, we do not study, but come to know, Forms; Forms are not out there, like sensible particulars, to be studied; they are what we come to know when we *reason* towards what things are for, rather than merely perceive those things. Forms are grasped by a kind of rational intuition attained in the optimum condition of the soul.[77] As they are necessarily interrelated, Forms as objects of knowledge constitute the system of intelligible conditions which define the optimum state of the soul. If the "divine place" or "realm of Forms" is said to be "beyond the heavens", this is because the system of Forms constitute the *intelligible basis* of the cosmos. Accordingly, to be divinely wise, such as the gods are, is simply a qualitative state or condition of existence, *in the cosmos*, in which the essential nature of the soul is commensurable with the intelligible basis of the cosmos. This is the state of perfection for all souls. It is characterised by unperturbable rationality defined in terms of rotary or circular motion. The "mortal place" is, by contrast, a life characterised by a degree of irrationality. Our failure to enhance

[77] Cf *Meno* 85c-d, 86b; *Theae.* 183aff.; 186a1-b, d1-5; *Parm.* 128c6-130a4; *Soph.* 250a7ff).

the rationality of our soul while we live occasions *Hades* on our death, where "Hades" means a state of existence in the cosmos characterised by a soul which, because of moral-intellectual failure, *becomes* lower forms of life until cured by the ministrations of the cosmic order (cf. *Phdo.* 81dff.; *Phdr.* 246b6; *Ti.*42).[78] The metaphor of the "flight of soul" is proxy for the elastic capacity of soul to progress or retrogress rationally and through this, morally, by its own pursuits and decisions. Plato, therefore, seems to have no patience with the notion that the act of initiation into the mysteries *per se* guarantees pleasant experiences after death, and may efface ethical short-comings. True initiation is rational endeavour to live according to the dictates of reason, to be attuned to the intelligible conditions which constitute the divine foundation of the order and rational motions in our cosmos.

6 Summary

Plato's philosophy of religion has been constructed out of three basic factors - Forms, soul, and body. The fundamental principles of the universe conceived as a cosmos is a system of paradigmatic,

[78] Plato is apparently inconsistent. as when in the *Phaedo* (80d5), he associates '"Hades" *in the true sense of the word*' with the noble, pure and invisible "realm" of gods [or Forms], while in the myth at the end of the same dialogue (107d), "Hades" is used in a context of the traditional sense of a literal underworld. But is Plato really inconsistent? Yes and no. No, if the qualification of 80d5 - *in the true sense of the word* - implies that the traditional understanding of Hades which means literally an underworld intimates a truth not fully grasped; and that what is reallly meant by "Hades" is a qualitative *condition* or *state* of existence rather than a place of existence. But Yes, for if "Hades" *in the true sense of the word* connotes a noble, pure and invisible state of existence, it cannot at the same time connote an ignoble, impure and visible state of existence arising from moral-intellectual failure of soul.

divine Forms. Forms are those realities in terms of which any event or phenomenon is *perfectly* true, orderly, good, beautiful, intelligible, happy, wise, just, equal, cold, etc. To serve as standards of perfection, Forms must be, *inter alia*, immutable, immaterial, and intelligible. But since that of which Forms are principles and causes is the changing, bodily sphere, divine Reason is required as the medial agent who, by knowing Forms, articulates "himself" in the otherwise chaotic physical sphere in "his" aspect as a regulative and constructive principle of motion. Reason's motion in the cosmos is called Soul, and is more truimphant in the astronomical than the sublunar sphere; for the fiery atmosphere is perfectly conducive to receiving the paradigmatic properties of Forms. This is exhibited in the rotary and circular motions of the astronomical beings - the stars and planets - motions characterised by invariance, uniformity, orderliness, timelessness, and mathematically expressible laws. It is from the astronomical sphere that the paradigmatic properties of Forms are transmitted to the sublunar sphere. In this way, the divine permeates the cosmos. Since it does so by its motion, Plato's cosmology is thus continuous with his Presocratic predecessors.

Divine Reason is called God. Derivatively, cosmic soul, and all those countless motions of Reason which inhabit the astronomical sphere. Thus Plato's gods are motion-gods, and their characteristic mark is supreme rationality. This is exhibited in their circular and rotary motions, motions which constitute full self-realisation or self-knowledge. Their rationality, as also their happiness, blessedness, etc., is determined by their close

association with Forms. It is also from association with Forms that the gods impart justice, care, temperance, goodness, and other standard-establishing properties of Forms to the sublunar sphere.

Reason in motion is less triumphant in the more recalcitrant and chaotic sublunar sphere, the environment inhabited by human souls. As participants in motion of Reason, human souls have a natural affinity to the Forms; they tend to the Form of Good, towards full self-realisation in the permanent happiness of the gods. Consequently, the task of human life is to engage in or promote those activities which will enhance our rationality. Since Forms are intelligibles, the desired rational life is largely attainable through theoretical studies of the sort that promote *a priori* reasoning of increasing abstraction and universality, and away from the particular and variable which characterise our environment, until we are able to utter words which will constitute absolute truth, or a philosophical *logos*, a sufficient and final reason of why things are what they are.

If this is too demanding, Plato's cosmos is virtue-friendly at different levels. God has provided sufficient guidance in the phenomenal world for us to succeed in other, less intellectually ascetic ways. Given the affinity between God and Forms, Plato's God may be said to be like Descartes' God in the Third Meditations in that both are hypothesised as a principle of sufficient reason, as a necessary being in consequence of certain epistemological phenomena. But unlike Descartes' God which is intended to explain sufficiently an agent's actual possession of a particular concept (e.g., infinity), Plato hypothesised both Forms and God as necessary simply for establishing the conditions in virtue of which we potentially possess all concepts, i.e., possess the means for

forming true opinions with regard to all phenomenal forms of existence, in religion, ethics, politics. In the *Philebus* Plato spells out the cognitive and practical functions of visible standards or measures; they are objects of true opinions and of the applied arts and crafts (like accounting, 55d-e, 62b-c, 61b1-2), while intelligible standards are objects of reason and the purely theoretic sciences such as number theory (57d, 58d, 61d-e, 66a-b). True opinion allows us to succeed at our projects in the world by guessing correctly the right course of action (*R.* vi, 506c), and from the point of view of success, this may be enough (*Meno* 98b-c). For opinion, as also knowledge, is for Plato as much a matter of pragmatics as of semantics. Indeed, it is a matter of determining how we can get along in the world than a determination of propositional accuracy. Thus the presence of standards in the phenomenal world makes the world better by constituting its intelligibility; and they allow us to make accurate and useful identifications and justifications, and to determine in what direction we may live, how well or worse off. So if, as I claim, the mark of Platonic religion is in activity oriented to enhance rationality, then, even if we fail to attain to the status of a philosophically wise person, we may nevertheless be spared a series of transmigrations on death, if we have genuinely done our best towards attaining true opinion or contributed to the rule of reason in our societies. For, we would, in our small way, have contributed to the rational sovereignty of cosmic soul, or to the omnipotence of cosmic virtue.

How Aristotle stands to the preceding philosophies of religion is the subject-matter of the next chapter.

FIVE

ARISTOTLE'S THEOLOGY

1 Aristotle's religious inheritance

The previous chapters show that Greek philosophical science since Thales culminates in the existence of *divine* first principles which necessarily exist as the ultimate presuppositions in an account of the cosmos or certain features of the cosmos. As explanatory realities, first principles are causally conceived, and in the cosmological accounts which necessitate them, this causality is principally expressed in terms of motion. But if the cosmos is accounted for by hypothesising or inferring the existence of *divine* first principles, it would seem to follow that religion has a profound claim on, and provides the metaphysical framework for, the rational speculations of Greek philosophical science. This applies no less to Aristotle.

Aristotle begins his philosophy in an arguably empiricist mood. His obvious tendency is to analyse, to distinguish, to resolve his data into separate categories, to fix each category by a clear definition in contrast to all the others, and finally, to account for the whole as far as possible in terms of the parts that are essentially explicatory of it.[1] He begins by forging the concept of a substance (*ousia*), which he takes to be a principle (*archē*) and a cause (*aitia*). Universals function only conceptually to explain particulars.[2] In this, he leads us to think that, against

[1] Aristotle's biological/zoological researches remain highly empirical and are to be distinguished from both his philosophical speculations on these researches and the more traditional areas of philosophy. These latter are what is represented here.

Plato, he self-consciously seeks the one form not beyond but *in* the material many, and that he seeks it not by abstracting from experience but by an analysis of it. He thus begins by taking the individual thing as that which is real: a particular "this" (e.g., a horse, tree, etc) is what constitutes a substance.

In the *Physics*, Aristotle draws various distinctions of cause, apparently in respect of their logical functions. They are all reducible to four; namely, formal, final, efficient and material causes, although he says that in nature the first three often coincide (198a22ff.). Accordingly, in the same work, he is beginning to see that nature fundamentally accommodates two causes, the formal and the material cause.[3] The material cause is somehow always distinguishable from the formal cause,[4] although it is not thereby implied that they are ontologically separate, i.e., as constituents, despite Aristotle's tendency to illustrate the form-matter distinction with compositive things like a house and the blocks constituting it or a syllable constituted by letters.[5] In many contexts form and matter *appear* to be primarily analytical categories: form as a predicative reference to a determinate state of existence, matter as that which is actually capable of realising that determinate state.[6] In this same work

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2 *Meta.* 1038b1-1039b3-19

3 'And since nature is two-fold, nature as matter and nature as form, the latter is an end... the cause as that for which, must be the latter' (*Phy.* 199a30-33). Also: 'Whenever there is a change something changes by the agency of something to something. But the thing which changes is matter and the thing to which is the form' (*Meta.* 1069b36-1070a3; cf. op. cit. 1032a13-20).

4 'Such and such a form in this flesh and these bones, this is Callias or Socrates' (*Meta.* 1034a5-7).

5 *Phy.* 188b17, 195a16-23

6 Cf. *Meta.* 1045b7-22; 1048a36-b6, 1049a2ff.

(*Physics*), however, the conception of "nature" as that which has an inherent principle of change (199b16-17) is, in apparent incoherence, juxtaposed with the existence of an immovable moving cause which is *non-natural* and whose causality takes precedence over nature.[7]

In the *Metaphysics* and elsewhere, there is an emphasis on taking substance not as a particular "this" but as "what it was to be" (*to ti ēn einai*),[8] the imperfect tense (*ēn*) plus the predicative infinitive (*einai*) signifying not past activity or state but timeless, dynamic essence. This conception of substance has metaphysical connotations, and contains a certain dualism: it distinguishes between a "this" particular (e.g., man) and the *essence of* this particular (man), between, i.e., the properties which belong to a particular in virtue of its essential nature, and the accidents which come to it from the particular character of its matter or its external relations with other things.[9] With a certain qualification, therefore, we seem to end, as in Plato, with an apparent conflict between the visibly or contingently given particular, and its eternal essence:

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[7] *Phy*. 198a30-b4; '...Now the principles which cause motion in a natural way are two, of which one is not natural as it has no principles of motion in itself. Of this kind is whatever causes movement, not being itself moved, such as that which is completely unchangeable and first substance and the *essence* of a thing, i.e., the form. For this is the end for the sake of which'.

[8] *Meta*. vii, 1031b6ff. I say "emphasis" because even in the *Organon*, Aristotle recognises two criteria for substance: a particular subject, and essence (or what-is-it) (cf. *Top*. 103b21-9)

[9] E.g., being musical can be predicated (presumably only) of a human being, but it is not part of the essence of a man that he is musical. Similarly with "being white", "being black", etc. See further *Post. An*. 73b4-5, b8-10, 83a24-31; *Top*. 102b4-6, b20-26, 103b17-19, *Phy*. 186b18-21; *Meta* 1026b31-33, 1025a14-15, 1029b14-15.

> The exponents of the Forms are partly right in their account when they make Forms separate, but they are partly wrong since by Form they mean the one over the many. The reason for this is that they cannot explain what are the imperishable substances of this kind which exist besides the particular sensible substances...However, I presume that even if we had never seen the stars, nonetheless, there would be eternal substances besides these which we know...(*Meta.* 1040b28-1041a3)

Even if the [eternal] stars had never been seen, still logic and epistemology would lead us to awareness of the existence of *eternal substances* besides sensible ones. The qualified identification of Aristotle with Plato is that although both recognise the existence of eternal essences (*ousiai*) or forms besides sensible ones, Aristotle is at pains to point out that his eternal essences or forms are not ontologically separate Platonic Forms, but essences *in* and of the sensibles. There is an argument to the effect that the existence of eternal essences is necessary to explain the possibility of knowledge and the continuity and identity of change in sensible substances (999a25-b19), and that eternal substances are forms as essences in and of sensibles:

> If there is nothing apart from individuals, there will be no object of thought but all things will be the object of sense...Further, nothing would be eternal nor immovable. For all perishable things perish and are in movement. But if there is nothing eternal, neither can there be a process of coming to be...For if neither matter nor substance is, nothing will be at all. And since this is impossible, there must be something besides the concrete thing, viz., the shape or form

However, this apparent conflict or distinction between eternal essence and its contingent actualisation is not peripheral nor peculiar to Aristotle. Nor is it a flimsy ontological quirk. Rather, it is logically continuous with or firmly grounded in the metaphysical-religious framework of thought which Aristotle inherited from his predecessors.[10] Naive religious consciousness intuits that the imperfect and finite, the insufficient and dependent presuppose, are explained or complimented by, a divine dimension of reality which constitutes the "sphere" of the eternal, perfect, everlasting, self-sufficient and causally supreme. This is confirmed by reason or logic and epistemology: the Presocratics, Socrates and Plato have shown severally, that any rationally accountable knowledge of space-time sense data points to distinctive, divine causes and principles which are eternal, supreme, and logically self-sufficient. Thus philosophical science confirms what naive religious consciousness intuits. Aristotle's inheritance of this religious frame of thought is conspicuous at two levels: at the microcosmic level it is most conspicuous in Aristotle's analysis of the substance of man; at the cosmic level it is to be found in his conception of theology. Let me expound on each of these successively.

On the substance of man, *de An.* ii, 1, defines soul as 'substance (*ousia*) as form (*eidos*) of a natural body (*sōma*) which potentially (*dunamei*) has life; and substance is actuality (*entelecheia*)'. This awkward-sounding meaning of soul is illustrated by the function of an axe: the [characteristic] function

[10] It is not necessary that Aristotle be aware of this inheritance *or* the scope of it. However, since he makes numerous allusions to the religious thought of the ancients, only the latter alternative could be true.

of an axe - [the capacity to actually fell, chop or cut, e.g., a tree] - is its soul; 'it is *what it was for it to be* an instrument of the kind, otherwise it would no longer be an axe, except homonymously' (410b10).[11] Now, what constitutes 'what it was for a man to be?' According to Aristotle, man participates generically in life. He is a social and political animal.[12] But the chief of his *differentia* is rationality.[13] This means that a man's [characteristic] function is to live a life guided by *reason*. But *de An.* iii 5ff. distinguishes *active reason* which is separate (*chōristos*), impassive (*apathēs*), unmixed (*amigēs*), eternal (*aidion*) and immortal (*athanaton*), and whose essence is actuality or self-fulfilling activity (*energeia*),[14] from *passive reason* (*pathētikos nous*) which is perishable, mixed and potential. In his account of cognition (430a10-19), active reason is said to "make all things" (*poiein panta*), while passive reason "becomes all things" (*ginesthai panta*). The meaning of "making" is clarified as a state of epistemic illumination by analogy to light which makes potential colours into actual colours. This suggests at least two things.

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11 "The capacity to actually fell, etc.", is supplied to complement what is fully being meant in this passage. It is implied that there are degrees of functional perfomance, but lack of a certain minimal capacity to perform - such as being in a certain state of bluntness, which impairs the axe's instrumental capacity to actually fell, cut or chop a tree, would constitute a loss of its soul.

12 *History of Animals* 488a; *NE* 1169b17ff.

13 The definition of life in the *de Anima* distinguishes three types of life - nutritive; sensitive and rational life - in order of increasing perfection, each successive life encapsulating the previous one.

14 "*Energeia*" is a valued, non-kinetic activity of self-realisation and self-fulfillment which occurs timelessly because the end of the activity is realised in the activity itself (see *Meta.* 1048b18-35; *NE* 1174a14-b8, b9; *de An.* 415b8-9; *de Sensu* 446b3-5). Translated as actuality, *energeia* must mean "realisation".

First, the light analogy suggests that active reason is the very condition of thought, just as the presence of light is a condition that makes perception possible. This suggestion does not hang on the analogy alone: the attribution to active reason of separateness or separability, impassivity, unmixedness, eternity, immortality, and essential actuality or self-fulfilling activity, entails, given Aristotle's metaphysics, that although active reason is operative in us, its status is *meta*physical, and that it is a kind of cause or principle (hence, "*poiein*"). But in Aristotle, as in his predecessors, the *meta*physical, viz., the essentially actual, eternal, immortal, reality is the fundamental ground of the physical, viz., the potential, contingent, and perishable, etc.[15]

Secondly, the light analogy suggests that active reason is or is the condition of intuition[16] or truth. Active reason is an essentially *energeia* reality. But *energeia* is a self-fulfilling activity which has its end in itself. The end of thinking activity is truth. Thus, just as the light in a sense is or makes us see what

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[15] There is some striking parallel with Plato's Good likened to the sun (in the *Republic*). For the sun is a material principle of unity which is, *inter alia*, not only a source of heat essential to growth but also a source of light essential to sight. Accordingly, it may be regarded as the cause and principle of knowledge. But as a cause and principle of the knowledge, the Good must be distinct from what it causes and is a principle of. Hence its *meta*physical status. For a metaphysical reading see Hamlyn's (1968, p. 140) notes on *de An.* 430a10; Clark (1975, V.3.20ff.); cf. Wedin's (1988, p 179) naturalistic reading of productive mind "as nothing more than the activity alone of episodes of individual thinking". Wedin either ignores or is unaware of the metaphysical grounding so characteristic of ultimate explanations in Greek philosophical science in general, and in Aristotelian science in this particular context. His attempts to explain away the metaphysical attributes of productive mind of which "*athanaton*" (immortal) is one, is not, I think, convincing.

[16] I use "intuition" for beliefs that hold without any inferential justification.

there is to be seen, so active reason, in a sense, is the truth or makes us realise what there is to be known. Active reason operates to realise or actualise thinking and the end of thinking. Aristotle says that 'in the individual potential knowledge has priority in time, but speaking absolutely it has no such priority; for that which *becomes* grows out of that which actually is' (431a). "What actually is", is in Aristotle, traceable to the pure form of divine intelligence. Thus the association of passive reason with becoming, and the metaphysics of active reason, combine to yield the implication that the former is concerned with the ordinary processes of thought which may be said to begin or end:[17] to have a memory, to imagine, to engage in discursive thinking, are processes of thought that may well be said to perish because they begin and end, and also because their content is constituted by the imagery of *material* forms received through perception.[18] On the other hand, the thinking activity itself has a metaphysical dimension by which our potential for grasping first principles and for intuiting the truth is, in Clark's words, 'realised by *receiving* the light which eternally is conscious Reality' (op. cit V.3.23). If this sounds good, the operation in us of *nous poietikos* would seem to suggest a parallelism with the operation of *nous* in the *Organon*. For there, *nous*, distinguished from *epistēmē*, is that by which we grasp the indemonstrable first principles of demonstration. At the same time *nous* is either understood as the product of or as accompanying induction or the inferential processes of demonstration (cf. *Post. An.* 100b3-12). Aristotelian

[17] See Hamlyn's notes on 430a18

[18] ibid. 432a3-10, 429b35ff.

science would therefore seem to recognise two inseparable but distinct cognitive functions: the demonstrative procedure of science and the idea of pure intuition of reason as the criterion of truth and knowledge. These appear to be complementary; demonstration requires intuition from start to end.[19]

The physical-metaphysical strains in human nature connoted by the distinction between active and passive reason have again an interesting parallelism with the *Ethics'* distinction between theoretical reason (*sophia*) and practical reason (*phronēsis*). The latter, which requires a kind of intuitive reason, is necessary for a fully ordered *human* life, while the highest exercise of intuitive reason, *sophia*, is required for a full realisation of the divine aspect of our life. If this is true, it would seem, therefore, that underlying the difference between demonstrative knowledge and intuition, between *phronēsis* and *sophia*, is man's complex nature as constitutive of an eternal, divine essence, and a principle of contingency.

In the *Ethics*, we learn that man's characteristic function (*ergon*) is to realise fully his potential as a rational being. In the highest sense this means to become, *as far as possible*, immortal and divine, with a corresponding divine pleasure and happiness:

> But the activity of reason, which is contemplative, seems both to be superior in worth and to aim at no end beyond itself...and all

[19] A demonstrative science is an axiomatised deductive system, a kind of syllogism (See *Pr. An.* 25b30, 41b1; *Post. An.* 71b18). Cf. 'But we say that neither is all understanding demonstrative but in the case of the immediates it is non-demonstrable and that this is necessary is evident: for it is necessary to understand the things which are prior and on which the demonstration depends... it is necessary that these immediates be non-demonstrable...there is not only understanding but some principle of understanding by which we become familiar with the definitions' (*Post. An.* 71b19-24; also 100a15-b4).

> the other attributes ascribed to the blessed man are evidently those connected with this activity, it follows that this will be the complete happiness for man...But such a life would be too high for man; for it is not insofar as he is a man that he will live so, but insofar as something divine is present in him... we must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us;...for man, therefore, the life according to reason is the best and pleasant, since reason more than anything else *is* man. This life is also the happiest (*NE* 1177b16-1178a7).

In enjoining us to immortalise ourselves by the divine activity of contemplation, Aristotle is not claiming that we literally become god in that activity, which will entail a non-earthly existence.[20] Immortality for man is the consummate exercise of reason, which is our divine and chief species-defining property. In contemplation our life becomes god-like, because it is engaged in those activities which is god's unqualifiedly. At *NE* 1153b25-32, it is said that all creatures pursue pleasure, because all have by nature something divine in them.[21] A man's *rational* desire for pleasure and happiness is rooted in his participation in divinity. Thus at *EE* 1248a25ff., Aristotle deals with the question of the

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[20] There is a difficult passage at *de An.* 430a22-25: 'In separation it is just what it is, and this alone is immortal and eternal. But we do not remember because this is unaffected, whereas passive intellect is perishable...' This seems to suggest that *nous* or active reason is the part of the soul which survives us, and then, it survives impersonally, i.e., if all affections - memory, loving, hating, discursive reason, perish with the individual.

[21] This is a large claim. Perhaps "by nature" or the universal quantifier "all" (creatures) requires some elaboration. Hitherto, it is the presence of reason in an animal which seems to define it as a participant in divinity. But if all creatures are moved by God as a final cause through the divine motions of the heavens, then, presumably, in this sense or specifically in the sense in which all living things perpetuate their species through continuous propagation, all creatures can be said to move towards a similar end, divine pleasure, although they will participate in this in different degrees corresponding to their different natures.

rise of desire of the right thing in man: chance cannot be its cause. Rather, it is God;[22] for the divine must be said to be the origin of thought, deliberation and desire for the right thing, in as far as the human is rooted in something vaster than itself; this encompassing reality pervades and influences it.[23] The divine is the cause of movement in the cosmos, so also of movement in us. These texts express the dualistic dimensions of life: the theoretic or contemplative life is beyond the measure of humanity; for it is the life of God - so to speak - rather than of man (*NE* 1178b8-24). Yet, from another point of view, it is the life of man, being the chief item of his species-defining properties.

To fulfil his essence a man requires both the use of practical wisdom (*phronēsis*) and philosophic wisdom (*sophia*). *Phronēsis* is required to work towards one's ideal in the contingent matters of individual human existence, and under the influence of passions of the soul which are not fully subject to reason (cf. *EE* 1249b5ff.). A fully ordered practical life gives the greatest opportunity for *sophia* (*EE* 1249b16ff.; *NE* 1177a12-18, 1145a6-11). But *phronēsis* does not involve the exercise of pure reason on its appropriate objects. Rather, two things are involved: from the subjective point of view it means the exercise of reason to govern the passions and to give some unity and order to the inner life of man as a complex being who is a compound of the divine and the mortal.[24] From an objective point of view, this also means the control of the conditions presented by the

[22] I shall use "God" in contrast to "gods" to imply a difference between a supreme god and subordinate gods or "god" used generically.

[23] This is supportive of the *de Anima*'s metaphysical grounding of human thinking activity

[24] Cf. *Pol.* 1287a30; *NE* 1178a9-22.

environment of the life of man in order to gain the opportunity for the exercise of his highest qualities (cf. *NE* 1143b1-3). In both respects, these spheres of life - ethics and politics - have to guide a man in dealing with particular facts of his existence, and have to take account of external conditions and, therefore, of an element of contingency which cannot be brought within the sphere of pure reason.

Indeed, one may argue that insofar as *sophia* involves contemplation (*theōria*) of necessary, unchanging, eternal, self-contained and noble objects - e.g., the divine and the fixed stars - the *phronimos* can rise to the contemplative level by contemplating, in one timeless whole, the form or unchanging pattern of a changeable thing.[25] The *phronimos*, can e.g., contemplate the human species, and/or the general ends of human life insofar as these are defined by the species; and he can see his ends as specifications of species-defining potentialities, either in intuition at the beginning of scientific explantion or in *theōria*, i.e., just for the sake of thinking. Nevertheless, it remains unclear how the contemplative reflection of species or ends can generate a more precise decision-procedure for one who characteristically grasps the ends of human life in his particular choices, actions; one whose knowledge of the good is expressed in the appropriate action, done in the right way, and in the mean that suits each situation (cf. *NE* 1144b1-1145a11). And if this level of contemplation does not increase practical wisdom by a jot, it remains that *phronēsis* cannot guarantee *sophia*. Indeed, *phronēsis* does not even arise from a theoretical capacity to

[25] cf. *NE* 1139a6-8; *Meta.* 1035b3-1036a1, 1030a6-1031a14; *GC* 336b25ff.

demonstrate and explain:

> since knowledge (*epistēmē*) involves demonstration but there is no demonstration of things whose first principles can be otherwise, and since it is impossible to deliberate about things that are of necessity, practical wisdom cannot be knowledge, because that which can be done is capable of being otherwise; not art because action and making are different kinds of thing. It remains, then, that it is a true and reasoned state of capacity to act with regards to the things that are good or bad for man. For while making has an end other than itself, action cannot; for good action itself is an end (*NE* 1140a33-b7).

Aristotle seems to be arguing that "the true and reasoned state of capacity to act" is not a product of a theoretical capacity to explain and demonstrate (*epistēmē*),[26] but of the unconscious action of reason socially developed or institutionally habituated. The subject-matter of practical wisdom is the fact of moral and political life; the unconscious comes before the conscious, the particular application of moral and political principles is prior to their distinct recognition as general principles.[27] Therefore, although, reasoning is involved in, and is important to, excellence in political and ethical conduct, it is only the one who, by participation in the common life of the community has had his nature developed, is capable of rising to knowledge in ethical principles and of making any sense of them when they are set before him (see 1142a11-15). The value of ethical and political

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[26] Aristotle seems to contrue *epistēmē* primarily as an attribute of persons rather than of propositions or a system of propositions.

[27] Cf. '...the truth in practical matters is discerned from the facts of life; for these are the decisive factor. We must therefore survey what we have already said, bringing it to the test of the facts of life, and if it harmonises with the facts we must accept it, but if it clashes with them we must suppose it to be mere theory' (*NE* 1179a19-23).

science is to bring to clear full consciousness the principles which underlie the unreasoned ethics of the ordinary good man or good citizen. Even the statesman, in order to meet the larger demands of legislation and administration must not merely know the grounds upon which the state in general and this particular state are based; he must be imbued, in his private life, with the data of life. This alone will enable him to analyse the nature of man and examine the particular vices which need to be repressed by good legislation (*ibid.*, 1180b29ff.).

The *phronimos*' knowledge is characteristically expressed in particular choices and actions, not by mechanically applying rules or working out a syllogism. But practical syllogism, as the articulation of the *phronimos*' knowledge, shows that whereas pure science has to deal with necessary and universal principles and what can be deduced therefrom, there is in practical wisdom an element of real contingency which cannot be universalised and then demonstrated. We are, in practical wisdom, dealing with a particular act to be done, and a particular end to be achieved, and this can be apprehended by a sort of "practical" intuition which is expressed in the action itself, and which cannot be produced in us by teaching or by any purely intellectual process. Thus practical wisdom can never be raised into pure science, and *phronēsis* does not necessitate *sophia*. Aristotle, unlike Plato, makes no attempt to connect the ethical and the political life as essentially continuous with the highest exercise of reason, although in the *de Anima* he says that all living things desire to share in the eternal and the divine and that *all activity* is in view of the divine (415a26-b7). There is otherwise no direct possibility of

connecting the relative truths of ethics and politics with the absolute principles of metaphysics. Correspondingly, Aristotle does not reconcile the two reasons - the perishable and the eternal reason - into a central *self* to which all the activities of a man are to be referred as the unique and necessarily continuous life of that man.

But if the relative truths of ethics and politics are not essentially continuous with the absolute principles of metaphysics, and if cognition of the latter constitutes the realisation of our divine essence, then, although political and ethical activities, properly organised and performed, may constitute a realisation of our potencies *qua human* beings and may constitute a sort of *eudaimonia*, yet they would have little or nothing to do with the specific difference in which we share in the divine. Were *sophia* essentially continuous with *phronēsis*, as they are not distinguished in Plato and Socrates,[28] the possibility would exist for degrees of popular participation in the divine activity or religion of *sophia*. Thus Aristotle seems to lay down narrower and stricter conditions for realising our divine self. If this is true, the operative assumptions here will be consistent with key features of "Olympian" religion, viz., the perceived radical disparity between the life of man and that of god,[29] and the belief that ethics and politics are not features of divine life (cf. *NE*

[28] Socrates too, like Plato in the middle dialogues, had a high intellectual standard for piety. But insofar as, for them, ethical and political life are integral to intellectual life, their pious man can be less ascetic than Aristotle's. In the *Laws*, for instance, the soul is intellectually open to divine participation from many spheres of life; in music, festivals, ethics, politics, astronomy, philosophical dialectics.

[29] This disparity between god and man is expressed in the statement that God and man cannot be *philoi* (*EE* 1244b14-19, *NE* 1158b30-35), although this is contradicted at *EE* 1238b18-20, b27; cf. *NE* 1163b1-5

1178b8ff.)

Although the religion of *sophia* in the *Ethics* is coherent with that of the *Metaphysics*, it is far too incomplete a view of Aristotelian religion, if we take other texts into consideration. Apparently, Aristotle has also a typically traditional view of religion, which is not necessarily incompatible with his more philosophical view of religion, although these different views are not welded into a more or less coherent philosophy of religion. In *Pol.* 1336b15-19, for instance, Aristotle permits religious festivals in his concept of the ideal state. He also takes it as self-evident that the traditional gods should be worshipped (*Top.* 105a5). Indeed, Aristotle himself explains religion from two sources. The first is the contemplation of the movements of the heavenly bodies (*de Philo* fr. 12-13W). He may then have viewed the heavenly bodies and their activity as the most divine thing of which man has experience. Aristotle's second source of religion is the prophetic power of the soul in dreams. Aristotle adopted the traditional term "*daimōn*",[30] the divine medial character, when he wrote that "dreams are not sent by God... but are *daimonia*, for nature is *daimonia*, but not *theia* (*de Div.* 463b13). He uses the same term to ascribe inspiration to someone (*EE* 1214a24). It may be objected that Aristotle is at pains in these passages to explain dreams and inspiration from natural causes (cf. *de Div.* 464a6ff.). This is true. But it should not mean that what we deem "natural causes" should not, for Aristotle, have divine character as well. Speaking about the question whether we can become good "by nature", Aristotle remarks: 'that which

[30] Cf. Euripides' *Helen*, 11367, *Troad.* 55-565, *Med.* 1391, Plato's *Symp.* 202e-203a, *R.* 392a, *Laws* 717b.

belongs to *nature* evidently does not depend on us, but as a result of some divine causes is present in those who are truly fortunate' (*NE* 1179b21, also *EE* 1248a26-35).[31] It is not improbable, therefore, that Aristotle conceived inspiration as both natural and divine. Accordingly, when he says that poetry is inspired by God (*entheos*) or that some utterances of the ancients are "divinely said" (*theios*), we have no reason to doubt that he is speaking from a conviction which could well be his own. In all these cases, he may be taken to mean that the divine is immanent in the natural world. From this point of view, Aristotelian religion need not be wholly constituted by *sophia*. *Sophia* would be the highest expression of piety and, if the divine is present in nature, celebration of religious festivals would be among other activities whose proper organisation could constitute lower, but acceptable degrees of piety. Such an open-ended approach to pious activity would be close to Plato in the *Laws*. So much for the microcosmic level at which Aristotle's "science" of man is grounded in the religious metaphysics of preceding thought.

The second level at which Aristotle inherits from his predecessors the religious frame of reference according to which the fundamental ground of all things is a divine cause and a principle is the cosmic level. Aristotle had drawn sharp lines between the sciences in the *Organon*, insisting that each subject-matter be dealt with according to its own principle and method. But in the *Metaphysics* (1026a6ff.), he embraces a universal science of being *qua* being,[32] and represents the universe as a

[31] Anticipations of the equation of "nature" and divine determination occur in Plato e.g., *Ap.* 22b; *Phdr.* 240a9, b2; *Laws* 642c, 682a.

[32] Cf. *Meta.* 1003b12-22.

teleological whole[33] which finds its principle in the pure form of Reason which is called God (*Meta* xii). The *Metaphysics* contains the substance of Aristotle's lectures on the ultimate conceptions of philosophy. Three specific names are employed to denote the kind of philosophy pursued there: "Theology", "Wisdom", or "First Philosophy".

Why "first" philosophy? A possible answer invites reference to Aristotle's classification of "sciences" in the *NE* where the most fundamental distinction of forms of knowledge is drawn between theoretical or speculative (*theōria*) *and* practical sciences. These differ in their subject-matter, aim and formal logical character. The aim of *theōria* is disinterested contemplation or recognition of truths which are what they are independently of our personal volition. Its end is *to know*. The purpose of practical science, e.g., politics and ethics, on the contrary, is to devise rules for successful interference with the course of events, to produce results which, but for our intervention, would not have come about. Its end is *to do* and *to make* something. Hence arises the corresponding difference in the objects studied by the two branches of philosophy. The objects of *theōria* are what Aristotle calls, *to me endochomena allōs echein* - things that cannot possibly be otherwise; truths and relations independent of human volition for their existence, and calling merely for recognition on our part. Practical science has to do with relations which human

[33] The teleology of the universe is a general theme which recurs extensively outside the *Metaphysics*. See e.g., *Phy*. 199a9-30; *P.A*. 639b11ff. In *Phy*. viii 8, Aristotle argues that it is absurd to suppose that purpose is not present in nature simply because we do not observe the agent deliberating. He illustrates this point with a doctor doctoring himself.

action can and has to modify - contingencies or things which can possibly be otherwise - *ta endechomena allōs echein* (*N E* 1140a33-b7). Then arises a logical difference between the conclusions of speculative and those of practical science. Those of the former are rigidly universal truths which are deducible with logical necessity from self-evident, axiomatic principles. Those of the latter are general rules, not strictly universal truths, as they relate to things which can be otherwise. "Practical" truths or rules hold good in most cases - *hōs epi to polu*, and are liable to occasional exceptions.

Theoretic science, for Aristotle, falls into three distinct and relatively independent branches, each with its own characteristic subject of study, and its own axiomatic principles. The logical basis of the division of the theoretic sciences in Aristotle is explained at *Meta.* 1026a10-32 by reference to the scope and class of entities which each deals with. First philosophy or theology deals with objects which are eternal, immutable and have separable and independent existence (*chōriston kath' hauto*).[34] The objects of mathematics are, according to Aristotle, things which have no independent existence except as modifications or numerical properties of material objects (e.g., a horse). A plane, e.g., is always the boundary of a certain solid, physical body. But for purposes of plane geometry it may not be necessary to take this into consideration. Physics, on the other hand, deals with objects which have no existence separable from matter, not being devoid of motion. The objects of first

[34] For references to the characterisations of the status of objects of theology as separable and independently existent, see page one of chapter one.

philosophy, however, are both separate, devoid of matter and, *a fortiori*, of motion. In mathematics the branches are not coordinate; geometry and astronomy are confined to special classes of entities, but universal mathematics - i.e., arithmetic, the principles of which are presupposed by every form of special mathematics - embraces them all (*Meta.* 982a26). Similarly, first philosophy is logically prior to the other sciences on the same ground on which arithmetic is prior to geometery; its initial assumptions are simpler and less complicated than theirs. In mathematics we consider objects - points, lines, surfaces, number - which are motionless and immutable, i.e., apart from their physical embodiments; whereas in physics we study objects which possess the double qualification of being embodied in matter and being, potentially at least, in motion. Hence, the presuppositions of mathematics are far simpler than those of physics.[35]

On the other hand, we study Being, not as the physicist does, insofar as it is composed of bodies in motion or as the mathematician does, insofar as it possesses number and spatial form, but in all its generality; we investigate what it means *to be*, and what relations between beings are deducible from the fundamental condition that they all *are*. In this sense first philosophy or theology has a higher degree of universality in scope than the other speculative sciences which it may be said to embrace.[36] The propositions of a physicist are specifically

[35] It was on this ground that Plato, in the educational scheme of *R*. vii, contended that the study of arithmetic and geometry - plane and solid - should precede that of kinematics and astronomy.

[36] Plato had taught that all the sciences are in the end deductions from a single set of ultimate principles which it is the business of the supreme science of dialectic to discover and formulate (*R*. vi, 510b-511d). However, Plato distinguishes dialectic from mathematics, and both from

applicable to bodies in motion;[37] those of mathematics are specifically applicable to numerable or spatial forms of bodies. But the universal principles of first philosophy are applicable alike to eternal, separable and immutable entities, to eternal and immutable but not separable entities, *and* to changeable entities, since each of these three is something of which you can say that it *is* or has *being*. These universal principles are said to be divine (*Meta*. 1026a16-19). The chief of these is God, the immaterial and immutable source of the vital movements and their numerability in the universe. Hence, the appropriateness of the name "theology" or "science of God" as a synonym for first philosophy. Hence, too, "Wisdom" (*sophia*) as the noblest and highest state of knowledge appropriate to the cognition of God.

In making God prior to any other kind of being, Aristotle thus holds that the complete explanation of any process presupposes God as an eternal, immaterial and immutable first cause or principle. The doctrine of God, therefore, becomes the necessary crown and culmination of all the sciences - physical and mathematical. But then he thinks that the business of theology comes to consist in the analysis of substances into their essential elements. These elements constitute, in Aristotelian language, the *causes* or *first principles* of Being. Thus it becomes possible to describe theology as the science of the causes and principles of being *qua* being. Aristotle also argues that there are two ways only in which a science can be divine; (i) if it is peculiarly the possession of God, and (ii) if it is concerned with divine matters.

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physical studies. So that there is, after all, a greater resemblance between Aristotle and Plato than seems at first sight.

[37] Aristotle has a narrow view of physics.

He concludes that his conception of theology is true because (iii) *all believe* that God is one of the causes (*aitiai*) and a kind of principle (*archē*), *and* that (iv) God is the sole or chief possessor of this sort of knowledge (*Meta.* 983a5ff.). Thus from the foregoing, Aristotle too, like his predecessors, conceives God not only as a cause and principle, but also as the reality which is ultimately presupposed in an account of the universe. Does this general conceptualisation of God satisfy the traditional set of conditions of divinity? I answer that it does more than satisfy these conditions. Let us proceed from books of the *Metaphysics* preceding the philosophical elucidation of God in book xii.

2 Traditional elements of Aristotle's God in *Meta.* i-xi

One of the earliest remarks about God is culled from Greek poetry. The background is deeply rooted in traditional religious and mythological belief. The point is to exemplify the state of absolute freedom of God. Aristotle quotes from Simonides, 'God alone should have this privilege', in order to emphasise the conditionality of human life in contradistinction to God's absolute freedom from all conditions. God is free in the sense that he exists for his own sake and not for another. God is thus self-sufficient.[38] The quotation is also used to illustrate the high rank of metaphysics as a science existing for its own sake and not for some utilitarian end: metaphysics alone among the sciences is divine, for it alone has God among the causes of which it treats, and is preeminently the freest and highest kind of knowledge that God should possess (982b29-983a10); 'hence, the possession of it

[38] Cf. *de Caelo* 279a20, where we learn that the divine realities existing beyond the outermost motion of the heavens live *the best* and the most *self-sufficient* of lives.

(sc. metaphysical knowledge) might be justly regarded as beyond human power; for in many ways human nature is in bondage' (982b29-30). At 997b10 Aristotle ridicules the notion that makes gods eternal humans. The difference between the nature of God and man is likewise stressed at 1008a24 by the use of the two as examples in grounding first principles of demonstration.

These passages emphasise a distinction between the nature and characteristics of man and God in connection with freedom and knowledge of first principles. Thus knowledge of first principles would seem to imply divine knowledge in the agent. Divine knowledge, accordingly, is implicitly regarded as preeminently that of God, but also it is something we do or can participate in. Further, the notion of God and the divine are associated with the most eminent and most honourable of all things (983a4-5). This spirit of reverence is constituted by divine ideality or perfection to which is added supremacy: if metaphysics is something that belongs properly to God, men might be tempted to feel that they should not approach it for fear of bringing upon themselves the divine vengeance. The objection is that the divine is not jealous. This is presumed self-evident, to the extent that poets who imagine the opposite are not to be trusted. Rather they lay themselves open to the proverbial charge that bards often lie. So, just as the Platonic demiurge was free from jealousy in originating the cosmos (*Ti.* 29e), so too Aristotle implies that, supreme knowledge aside, goodness and generosity are characteristics of the divine. Aristotle distinguishes in Empedocles "the most blessed God" (1000a25ff.), who alone is not produced by strife from the "long-lived gods" (a32) who are so produced. His

concern here is to safeguard supreme knowledge in God (b3-9), while polemically asserting that this conclusion is not coherent with the Empedoclean premises: 'Hence it follows on his theory that God most blessed is less wise than all the others; for he does not know all the elements; for he has in him no Strife, and knowledge is of like by the like'. At 1026a15-32 the divine is treated as the object of the highest or theological science. The object consists in things separate from matter and immobile (a15-16). These are the causes of what are "visible among things divine" (a18) and are characterised as eternal (a17). The divine exists in this separate and immobile nature, and is the highest kind (*genos*) of reality (a19-22). Accordingly, it is the primary instance of being. This account of the divine is paralleled at 1064a37-b14.

To summarise. Aristotle's conception of God satisfies the basic conditions of divinity already laid out - (causal) supremacy, ideality or perfection, self-sufficiency, immortality; and this, so far, links Aristotle very closely to his predecessors. For him too the fundamental basis of all things is a divine reality (called God) - as that which is ultimately presupposed in an account of the universe. God is a cause and a principle, of a free and sovereign nature, most eminent and most honourable. God is something that men may tend to fear, though in truth "his" nature is free of jealousy. Divine nature has to be kept purged of all anthropomorphism, except that, like humans it possesses knowledge, though unlike them, it possesses the highest kind of knowledge, and is the object of the highest science. It is eternal, and is one of the first causes of things, indeed the supreme cause

and principle of divine things visible to us. As a first cause, it is separate from matter and is entirely immobile, and is the primary instance of being, though its pure immateriality does not prevent its being manifest in things which appear to us. I turn now to the full philosophical examination of God in book xii, beginning with the 6th chapter.

3 Book xii, chapter 6

The explicit description of God is given mainly in chapters 7 and 9. But the groundwork is laid out in chapter 6. An already established framework of tripartite substances is used. Two of the types are physical and observable to the senses. Of these, type (i) which are sublunary entities such as plants and animals, is perishable. Type (ii), the heavenly bodies, is imperishable. Type (iii) is neither perishable nor observable[39] Accordingly, its existence must be established. Aristotle argues for it from motion and time.

He begins by assuming that motion, and time - which is a measure of motion - are eternal.[40] For if we suppose time to be generated, it follows that before that there was no time. But the very term "before" implies time. The same applies to the

[39] 1069a30ff. The tripartition of substances recalls the division of sciences as concerned with unmoved things, moving but imperishable things, and perishable things at *Phy*. 198a29-31. But it does not fit the tripartite division of philosophy into theology, mathematics and physics earlier at *Meta*. 1064a29ff. In Plato's cosmology, the same levels of reality are to be found, although he does not specifically draw attention to it. Xenocrates too is reported to have taught a tripartition of reality, distinguishing between the objects of *nous*, the objects of *doxa* (the celestial beings) and sensibles. The object of *doxa* are both sensible and intelligible (fr. 5H; *Adv. Math.* vii, 147).

[40] Cf. *Phy*. 219b1-3.

destruction of time.[41] If time is eternal motion is eternal. And of motion only spatial,[42] circular motion[43] is eternal.[44] As motion and time presuppose substance which is primary in regard to them, the substance has to be eternal. Since the substance has to cause the motion, it has to be actual. And if it has to cause the motion eternally, it has to be essentially actual (*energeia*), i.e., without any potentiality in itself; for any potentiality in it as a substance would make it susceptible to change and unable to

41 Aristotle's view on the eternity of time is based on his belief that time exists in instants; each instant has the character of a mean, for it marks the begining of a new and the end of a previous time. If so there never was an absolute end or beginning. Accordingly, time and being would be intrinsically continuous. Cf. 222a10ff.

42 Although this is not made explicit in context, for Aristotle, spatial motion implies physical substances. See further, *de Caelo* 279a15. What holds true of time holds of motion, and what holds of motion holds of substance, since for Aristotle, what is predicated of an accident also applies to its substance. Cf. *Phy*. 251b18ff. In *de Caelo* 270a17-21, he argues that an eternal body is outside the realm of contraries, for its circular motion has no contrary. At op. cit. ii 3 we encounter the following reasoning: the divine must have a perpetual activity. The heavens are divine. Hence they have a circular body so as to be able always to move with circular motion. Hence in this context, spatial motion (motion *kata topon*, 1071b11-12.) implies physical substance.

43 Circular motion would seem to derive from the doctrine in the *de Caelo* (286b10-11) according to which: 'the shape of the heaven is of necessity spherical. For that is the shape appropriate to its substance and also by natural primacy'. Aristotle is not, I think, making any claim for spatial sphericality. The natural primacy and the substance which is appropriate to sphericality are to be understood as conditions, respectively, for circular motion and substance in circular motion.

44 Cf. *Phy*. 251a8ff., where the argument that movement is eternal starts from the definition of movement as the actualisation of the movable *qua* movable: if things capable of being moved would have been at rest before being in movement, a change had occurred before the supposed first change. Likewise, movement is imperishable, because if it were discontinued, there would be a change after the last change. On the other hand, *Phy*. viii, 6 argues for continuous movement from the assumption that movement is always.

account for the eternity and actuality of the movement,[45] with the consequence that eternal motion might never have been. It is also concluded that substances with essential actuality must be immaterial, the assumption being that materiality is the basis of potentiality.

This argument from eternal motion and time concludes that there must exist eternal, immutable and immaterial *substances* which are essentially actual, although the chapter began with a promise to prove the existence of an eternal and immutable substance - in the singular. The apparent inconsistency is occasioned, I suppose, by Aristotle's ambiguous use of *ousia* in *Meta* xii to refer to either a level of reality or an ontological entity. The conclusion is therefore contextually consistent, if Aristotle has in mind not only the prime mover but also movers of the celestial spheres, as subsequent discussions indicate. That this is the case is supported by the following explanation of the observed motions in the cosmos which, for Aristotle, are basically two; eternal, circular motion, and variety of motion as in generation and destruction. Hence, at least two kinds of eternal substances are required to explain the *perpetual variety* in the cosmos:

...the same things have always existed, passing through a cycle or

[45] Aristotle clearly rejects a cosmological system like Anaxagoras' which posits Reason as a principle which introduces order into an otherwise haphazard world or Plato's (mythical) account of time in the *Timaeus*. For Aristotle, Anaxagorean Reason is an actuality but not completely so. It is an actuality with a potentiality to organise. Yet such a potentiality cannot logically explain the *de facto* eternity of perpetual variety in cosmic motion, as he sees it. Platonic Forms as first principles are, in Aristotle's view, worse candidates since he sees them as static entities with no productive function (*Meta*. 990b9ff., 1071b13-17.

in accordance with some other principle. If then, there is a constant cycle, something must always remain acting in the same way; and if there is to be generation and destruction, something else which is always acting in different ways. This must act in one way in virtue of itself and in another in virtue of something else - either of the third agent or the first. But it must be of the first (*to prōton*); for this must in turn be the cause both of the third and of the second...since it was the cause of perpetual motion, and something else is the cause of variety, both together make the cause of perpetual variety.[46]

Two principles of explanation are involved here, and there is a third reality which they are postulated to explain. This third reality is the sublunar world. The argument implies that these tripartite realities are in a systematic causal relation of relative self-determination. The complex proposition, 'If then there is a constant cycle, something must always remain acting in the same way; *and* if there is to be generation and destruction, something else which is always acting in different ways', is ambiguous and abstract. The cause of the constant cycle could be the first mover. After all, the chapter has not raised any question of plurality of movers, and nothing in the argument makes us suspect there are several. In view of the fact that eternal, immaterial substance is an essential and complete actuality without any potentiality, there seems to be no more metaphysical grounds for plurality and differentiation. Alternatively - and I favour this - since the argument is highly abstracted from any concrete reference, a forward reference to chapter 8 suggests that a first mover, which is absolutely self-determined, and the sphere of the fixed stars or their movers as dependent on the first mover, may be respectively referred to here as "the first" and "the second",

[46] 1072a2-19.

although specifically, the cause of generation and destruction would be the sun which has its own yearly orbit in the ecliptic and a daily rotation round the earth which is explained in turn by reference to the rotation of the sphere of the fixed stars.[47] Both the "first" and the "second" principles determine perpetual variety characteristic of phenomenal existence in the sublunar sphere.

4 Book xii, 7

Against this background of chapter six, the first part of the ensuing chapter (7) identifies the basic circular motion as that of the eternal first or outermost heaven, placed in a context of levels of reality in order of relative self-determination: 'and since that which is moved while it moves is intermediate, there is something which moves without being moved, something eternal which is both substance and self-fulfilling activity or actuality (*energeia*). Some intimation of this appears at *de Motu An.* 699b31ff., where it is said that it would be thought strange were the origin of [all] movements inside [the heaven]. This is illustrated by a quotation from the *Iliad* (viii, 20-22): 'No, you will not pull Zeus, the highest of all, from heaven to the plain, no, not even if you toiled right hard; come you, all you gods and goddesses! Set hands to the chain'. Jaeger (1947) drew attention to fragments 25 and 26 of Xenophanes: 'Always he remains in the same place, not moving at all, nor indeed, is it fitting to go here or there at different times; but without toil he shakes all things by the will of his mind'. By quoting from the *Iliad*, Aristotle gratefully acknowledges anticipation of his "unmoved mover". But also, he could not be

[47] The *G C*. ii 10 explains in greater detail how [the sun] is causing generation and corruption. Cf. *Ti.* 36b-d.

unaware of how Xenophanes came close to the same idea. Let us go back to the text under consideration.

The first heaven, Aristotle is claiming, is eternal, and has a corresponding mover that imparts motion without undergoing change. It is in this way that objects of thought and desire cause motion, with knowledge the basic cause and presupposed by desire.[48] Accordingly, the mover of the first heaven imparts motion as the object of desire, and through the movement of the first heaven accounts for the variety in cosmic motion. But the superior mover is completely actual, and therefore necessarily existent, and in this way good. In virtue of being good, it is the first principle upon which the heaven (*ouranos*) and nature (*phusis*) depend (*ērētai*, 1072a21-b14).

Ever since Empedocles pressed the traditional god, Aphrodite (= *Philia*), into philosophical service in partial explanation of the processes and movements in the cosmos, "desire" had become a topic of philosophical exploration. Plato deals with the concept of desire in the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* where *Eros*, a *daimonion*, appears as the central force which mediates the phenomenal and the divine, and which takes on several forms and

[48] This supports *EE* 1248a25ff., where God is said to be the object of all desires. In *de An.* iii 9 (432b26ff.) and 10, Aristotle investigates what the sources of motion in animals are. He concludes that the object of desire, *to orektikon*, is primary: it is the starting point of activity of the rational (*to logistikon*) part of the soul. This excludes the active or theoretical intellect from initiating desire, apparently inconsistent with *Meta* xii where *noēton* is the starting point of all desire. Perhaps the *Meta* xii context envisages *nous* of the celestial realities and not human thought. Indeed, in the *de Anima*, Aristotle admits some influence of the intellect on desire, not in the order of efficient but of formal causality. It still remains that on this issue there is some difference between *Meta* xii and *de Anima*.

realises different ends. Yet, as he points out in Diotima's speech, *Erōs* points to Forms, and the common object of all *Erōs* is to possess for ever the Good. In all its forms, *Erōs* reaches out for something beyond. Generally, sensible things are represented by Plato as yearning for (*oregetai*, *Phdo*, 75a2) immaterial, paradigmatic Forms. The cause of the rise of desire is the belief that sensible things are an image of true reality, Forms; therefore they turn to it (ibid. 74d). The basic function, the basic desire of all things is to reach the Form in which they partake, i.e., to become its perfect image. This desire is at the origin of their activity. One may also explain this in terms of *sungeneia*: kinship with Forms is the ultimate ground for desire and striving. Admittedly, "participation", "kinship" are obscure metaphors in Plato.

But however inadequate Plato's explanation of the rise of desire may seem, the way in which Aristotle's first mover imparts motion to the universe is even more obscure or rather too sophisticated. All we can say is that final causality seems to be the only type of causality attributed to the first mover. The second and material mover, the first heaven, although it has a primary locomotion (*phora prōtē*) which is an actuality or a self-fulfilling activity (*energeia*), it does not impart motion in this unmoved fashion, but rather by being moved (1072b4ff.).[49] A

[49] Cf. *GC*. 323a30-33 where Aristotle brings the example of our being grieved by someone to illustrate the relation between a final cause and what it immediately causes. In such a case we say that this person touches us, although we do not touch him. There is not the slighest indication at this point that the first mover would have to be in place in order to move. The concept of the first mover here goes beyond that of *Phy*. 267a21-b9, which advances a doctrine of the first mover as being at the circumference of the world, and assigns efficient causality to it. More

type of causality other than final causality is accordingly suggested for it. In a subsequent context the heavenly bodies are expressly characterised as divine (1074a30-31).[50] For their sake all cosmic locomotion takes place (a25-31). In this way they too have the role of final causes.

The tripartite relation of (a) unmoved mover-(b) moved mover-(c) moved, may also intimate a specific theory concerning the structure of reality by way of an analysis of movement. Firstly, if this is true, not only will Aristotle conceive (a) as an absolutely necessary existent, but also (b) is intermediate (*meson*) in the sense that it shares in the properties of (a) - in its identical and continuous activity, and those of (b) - movement. Aristotle does not explain why the final causality of the first mover directly results in the circular motion of the first heaven. The heaven (*ouranos*) and the world of change (*phusis*) are said to (literally) hang (*ērētai*) from the first mover (1072b14), implying that both *ouranos* and *phusis* tend towards the first mover, *phusis* presumably indirectly through *ouranos*, so that while continuous, circular motion of the first heaven imitates the perfect *energeia* of the first mover, sublunar things tend to circular motion, as the perpetuity and continuity of coming-to-be and destruction of all things is said to approximate eternal being (*G C* 336b25ff.)

Secondly, since the first mover moves by being desired, and since desire follows upon thought, it would seem that only things

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will be said on this issue of final causality later.

50 For the divinity and preceding conceptions of "heaven", see *de Caelo* 278b10-21. At 284a11, Aristotle writes: 'the ancients gave to the gods the heaven and upper place as being alone immortal, and our present argument testifies that it is ungenerated and indestructible'.

with reason or soul can directly desire the first mover.[51] That celestial beings would have to be intelligent is suggested by the fact that what they are supposed to desire is specified as Reason (*Nous*, 1072b20). Accordingly, as in Plato's cosmology, circular (and rotary) motion would be a high degree of rational behaviour; other kinds of motion would range from less intelligent to irrational or non-rational behaviour. On the other hand, to say that celestial beings should be ensouled intelligent beings does not, strictly speaking, follow for Aristotle; for if the first mover is Thought, moves by being desired, and if desire presupposes thought, the condition for the desiderative motivation for all things, lunar or sublunar, is satisfied by the very existence of the first mover. Thus at *GC*. 337a1-7, sublunar elements which are certainly not ensouled are said to imitate the cyclical movement of the celestial bodies. But if they can do so without being ensouled, one would assume that the heaven can also imitate the perfection of the first mover without being ensouled.

However, the strongest reason for imputing intelligence to the celestial beings is that they are expressly divine realities and they are alluded to as gods (1074ab2-3). The divine is, of course, an agent, and gods are intelligent beings. By being bodily and intelligent, they are thus ensouled. If so celestial beings would be self-movers by virtue of their souls. And if that is what they are, there seems to be no more need for them to be moved, expecially so if soul *qua* causal power is immortal and, for Aristotle, eternal.

[51] In the *de Caelo*, there are indications of a doctrine according to which the first heaven is a body forever alive and endowed with mind (cf. 292a19-21). At 279a28-30: 'from it derive (*ērētai*) the being and life which other things, some more or less articulately but others feebly enjoy'.

If Aristotle wants to argue that celestial beings require an unmoved mover because by being bodily they have a potentiality, so that their existence presupposes the pure actuality of an unmoved mover, it is a good objection to say that the moving causes of the celestial beings are themselves eternally existent. Nor can he argue that soul is, by definition, an embodied self-mover, and therefore a potentiality. For one who, like Aristotle, believes that the cosmos is eternal, such argument is not available, at least in respect of soul *qua* self-mover. So why should that which is eternally self-moving require something else to move it? In all essentials, Plato provides a visible doctrinal background for Aristotle's tripartite theory of motion.[52] But Plato avoids Aristotle's problem because he defines self-moving motions as motions of Reason (God).

The identification of primary substance with Reason (*Nous*, 1072b20) called God (1072b25), the nature of whose activity is defined as a kind of motion, is another intimation of Aristotle's indebtedness to his predecessors. Insofar as Reason is the first cause of all motions, rational activity becomes the standard measure to which everything - celestial or sublunar, strives. Moreover, as Reason is, in Plato, part or an aspect of the system of divine first principles, so too Aristotle implies that Reason is one, though the chief of divine first principles (*Meta.* 983a8-9). In the present context, Aristotle mentions that the first objects (*ta prōta*) of desire and thought are the same (1072a26ff.). Elsewhere in the corpus, supramundane principles are mentioned which evoke Platonic Forms: the *Phaedrus* had talked of

[52] This applies to the *Statesman*, *Laws*, *Timaeus*, *Philebus*, and the *Epinomis*

colourless, shapeless, intangible, immaterial divine realities (Forms) existing "beyond the heavens" where no poet has yet sung. Aristotle in turn writes: 'It is clear that there is neither place nor void nor time outside the heaven. *Hence the things there* are of such a nature as not to occupy any place, nor does time age them, nor is there any change in any of the things which lie beyond the outermost motion; they continue through their entire duration unalterable and unmodified, living the best and the most self-sufficient of lives'. Aristotle does not explain how or why the things beyond the heavens are alive.[53] Did he already have here the idea of immaterial first movers? It is not easy to say. However that may be, he too holds the Platonic thesis that the heaven and its divine realities which tradition calls gods are subordinate to some ultimate, first principle(s).

There is also Aristotle's identification of the supreme principle in the category of *the* good (*to kalon*):[54]

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[53] *De Caelo* 279a18. It would seem that of Plato's first principles only Reason can be said to have or to be life. But it can be argued otherwise, since motion is strongly associated with life, and the Form of motion is one of Plato's key Forms. Moreover, we have in the *Phaedo* (106d4) a Form of life which somehow resurfaces in the *Timaeus* as the Form of Animal. In the *Sophist* (249), Plato ridicules the friends of Forms who conceive of Forms as static, lifeless first principles. This would not necessarily mean that Forms are alive, but his conception of complete or perfect being (*to pantelōs on*) as including soul, mind and life suggest that at least Forms are in a necessary relation with the Form of life or movement.

[54] 1072a28ff. "The good" conflicts with *EE* 1218a30, according to which one cannot say that all things desire some one good, because each is seeking its own special good. Apparently Aristotle is arguing here against the Platonic doctrine of the Good. Yet one wonders whether this text does not conflict with the final causality of *Nous* who is loved by other things. According to *EE* 1218a30 the first mover could at the most be the good of one class of beings, e.g., of the first heaven.

> The primary object of desire and the intelligible (*noēton*) are the same. For it is the apparent good that is the object of appetite (*epithumēton*) and the real good that is the object of rational will (*boulēton*). Now thought is moved by the intelligence and one of the series of contraries is essentially intelligible. In that series[55] substance stands first, and substance that is simple (*haplē*) and exists in timeless self-fulfilling activity" (*kat' energeian*).

Aristotle's doctrine of dual desires, and their correspondent dual objects, the apparent and real good, is predicated on the basis of man's mortal-immortal duality. The distinction between the real and apparent good is Socratic (See *Ap.* 30b; *G.* 466b-468d).[56] The real good is spiritual, the apparent good material (*E E* 1218b32-34). Aristotle uses "*kalon*" instead of "*agathon*". At *GA* 731b24-27, *to kalon* and *to theion* are said to be the cause of what is better in things which admit of them. But why *to kalon*? Primarily, *kalos* means "beautiful", but is practically indistinguishable from *agathos*. Traditionally a *kalos kagathos* is a noble man, a man of practical excellence, and practical excellence is associated with goodness (not necessarily "moral goodness"). In the philosophical tradition, *kalos* is very strongly associated with *taxis*, "order" and derivatively, of *kosmos* (orderly system).[57] At least this is true of Plato, and we shall see that it is likewise true of Aristotle. Plato also predicates *ariston* of divine Reason and uses "*kalos*" to characterise the perfection of

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55 Aristotle recognises two series, lists or columns of contraries similar to those of the Pythagoreans: One, the positive, contains being, unity, substance, etc.; the Other is negative, and contains not-being, plurality, non-substance, etc. The negative terms are intelligible only with reference to the positive.

56 See further *NE* 1113a23; *EE.* 1235b25-28.

57 Cf. 1078a31.

"his" causal production. Aristotle too predicates "best" (*ariston*)[58] of divine Reason (1072b1), and equates it to a substantivised *kalon* in order to make it, like Plato in the *Symposium*, an object worthy of philosophical contemplation, desire or love. So that by *to kalon* Aristotle could also be following Plato in associating the rational desire for first principles rather than for food and such other things with the highest quality of life, which is intellectual (and also moral, for Plato). This will be consistent with the *Ethics'* association of *sophia* with the contemplation of God.

Given the equation of *to kalon* to *Nous*, and the fact that the latter is the *final* cause of all movements in the cosmos (1072b2-3, b14), *to kalon* could be used here as a comprehensive notion ranging from the implication that the universe is orderly, aesthetically, teleologically and morally organised to the implication that so organised, the parts of the universe desire to be *kalos*, if not rational, for its own sake (note in this connection the phrase (1072a35), "*to kalon kai to di' auto haireton*" which may be read "The Good and that which is desirable in itself"). From the human point of view, that which deserves to be chosen for its own sake is spiritual well-being or happiness (*eudaimonia*, *NE* 1097a30-34), and this consists in the contemplation of God. Consequently, the equation of *to kalon* to *Nous* is apt for Platonic piety - viz., activity oriented to the cognition of divine first principles.

Aristotle goes on (1072b2ff.) to distinguish two senses of the final cause as an object of desire: (i) as the good for something, and (ii) as the good which is the end of some action. (ii) but not (i) applies to immovable objects. In context, it is difficult to

[58] According to *Phy.* 194a30, only the best can be a final cause.

understand Aristotle's intention in making this distinction. But a parallel text at *EE* 1249b14ff. may be of help: God rules not in the sense that he issues commands, but in that he is an end. This is further clarified by the statement that the term "end" has a dual meaning, viz. that "for the sake of" and that "in the interest of". Since God does not need anything, he cannot be an end in the latter sense. In the book xii passage under consideration, God is said to be *the* Good and a final cause. The assumption is, therefore, that God as a final cause does not direct things "in his own interest", since he is completely self-sufficient,[59] but as that for the sake of which. Thus the life of pure reason is, in the final analysis, that which is desirable for its own sake; it is the life whose end is in the very activities which realise it.

From this religious point of view Aristotle describes the *energeia* of Reason as the best and the pleasantest life (*diagōgē*):

> and its life (*diagōgē*) is such as the best we enjoy but for a short moment of time. For it is ever in this state - which we cannot be and its *energeia* is also pleasure (*hēdonē*) and therefore waking, perception and thinking are the most pleasant.

"*Diagōgē*" has the ordinary sense of "passing time". In *Pol.* 1334a16 the term has the sense of certain activities of our leisure time in which we indulge because we enjoy them, as for instance, study and intercourse with friends. At 1338a10 it is associated with *scholē* (leisure), and at 1339b17-19, it is connected with happiness and pleasure. At *Meta.* 981b16ff. and 982b23, Aristotle distinguishes between things necessary for life (and

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[59] That God is self-sufficient, we have noted, is one of the conditions of divinity and is a theme which recurs in Greek philosophy and literature. See, e.g., *EE* 1249b15; *de Caelo* 279a22. Cf. Xenophanes A32; Parmenides B8, 33; Euripides *H.F.* 1346-7; Xenophon *Memo.* 1, 6, 10; *Ti* . 33d, 34b.

efforts needed to acquire or ensure them) and man's life, pursuits, studies, once these basic needs have been fulfilled. This second state is called *diagōgē* and is associated with *hēdonē* (981b22). The assertion that man's noblest pastime or activity is that of God, that the noblest human acts will show some similarity with the activity of God, is apparently based on an analogy which assumes the religious contrast between the life of man and of God by using the human condition as the basic model on which to imagine the ideality of God, and on the conviction that man shares in Reason.

At *EE* ii 1, Aristotle distinguishes between various types of activity, viz., work which produces something and work which consists in the use of a faculty. It is the latter which constitutes man's highest activity (1219a14ff.). Aristotle maintains that pleasure is an activity (*Protr.*, During (=D) 87). In *NE* x, he seems to have modified his theory of the identification of activity and pleasure of *NE* vii 13. For in *NE* x 4, he asserts only that pleasure accompanies, completes, or intensifies activity. Therefore the text of *Meta.* 1072b17, which describes God's life as pleasure (*kai hēdonē hē energeia toutou*), need not be understood as affirming complete identity between pleasure and activity. One could take it as meaning that pleasure accompanies activity. In *Protr.*, D87, Aristotle writes that "perfect and unimpeded activity certainly contains in itself delight, so that the activity of thinking must be the most pleasant of all". Obviously Aristotle here does not mean pleasure derived from sensation (cf. *NE* 1154b25-28). Plato's conception of *hēdonē* is different, and prevents him from ascribing it to God.[60] Of some importance is the insight that pleasure has a supra-temporal dimension, and that we share in the life of God.

[60] c.g. *Epin.* 985a.

That man is incapable of sustained and uninterrupted activity is a theme which recurs in Aristotle,[61] and basically reflects traditional belief according to which, although gods share with humans the same properties of life like thinking, and enjoy the same psychological states like pleasure and happiness, they have these properties and enjoy these states in a superlative degree.[62] God, says Plato at *Laws* 716c-d, is the measure of all things. For him, the function of life is to become god-like, and this means to become truly wise (*Theae.* 176a). A fully rational life coincides with the happiest and morally the best life, and this also consists in the apprehension of divine first principles. In the late dialogues, although this doctrine is not abandoned, rationality is defined in terms of motion. Circular motion, i.e., the supremely intelligent life of the divine, celestial beings, becomes the proximate standard by which sublunar beings may attain immortality and divinity. True piety, therefore, comes to consist in having (and perhaps, derivatively, in seeking) a fully rational life. And this involves a state of mind which is commensurate with the eternal patterns of the celestial motions. Aristotle too conceives intellectual activity as the chief characteristic function of man, and a fully rational life - which coincides with the most pleasure and happiness - as the standard for immortality and divinity. But Aristotelian immortality for man is, we have mentioned, life sufficiently god-like with no implication for Platonic middle period non-earthly existence. However, Aristotle follows Plato in conceiving a fully rational life as constituted by knowledge of divine first principles and as constituting a

[61] *NE* 1175a3-4; cf. 1177b16ff. already alluded to.

[62] Cf. Pindar's 6th *Nemean Ode*, where men, although of a common parentage with the gods, are as nothing in comparison with the eternal abiding of the latter.

corresponding sort of divine happiness.

Since immovable activity and a superlative degree of *energeia* belong only to the divine life of pure Reason, it follows that the standard function of man as a rational being is *energeia* of the superlative sort, although, as a sublunar being, our proximate standard of life is the divine, intelligent activity of the first heaven. If becoming attuned to the eternal patterns of the divine, celestial motions is what constitutes "contemplation of God" for Aristotle, then, he was fully anticipated by Plato who set the same standard of piety for man in his late dialogues. For circular motion is presumed to induce a highly rational life in which the principles constitutive of soul become fully commensurate with the divine, first principles which govern the heavens.[63]

Since the value of circular motion derives, it seems, from its being rational and also from its being a high degree of *energeia*, we may ask: in what consists the *energeia* corresponding to *Noetic* pleasure? The answer lies in Aristotle's use of human life as the basic model in terms of which the nature of God may be conceived. The use of such model is deeply rooted in traditional religious thought, as we have already noted. First, Aristotle assumes his belief that pleasure is a predicate of human activity. This is combined with both man's fundamental desire for knowledge (*Meta.* 980a3; *NE*, 1096b17), and the highly evaluative conception of the kind of knowledge that seeks first

[63] Ordinarily meaning "seeing", "observing", particularly the spectacle of festivities in honour of the gods, Plato's philosophical transposition of *theōria* may also be expressed as the rational vision of divine first principles or derivately as the life dedicated to the "contemplation" of the Forms (cf. *R.* 486a, 517d) In Aristotle too, the term signifies in the highest sense philosophical contemplation the object of which is above all knowable (*Protr.*, D86). This contemplation is also a kind of intuition rather than study or discursive reasoning (see *de An.* 430b17ff).

principles (*sophia*). He then argues that thinking attains the best of objects (substance), and the highest kind of thinking attains it in the highest degree (107218-20). God or divine things are taken to be the supreme object(s) of contemplative knowledge (*N E* 1177b26-1178a7; *Meta* xii) and its contemplation is said to be the best and the most pleasant life. Thus, in conceiving God as at once the supreme object of knowledge and as itself pure thinking activity, Aristotle easily moves to associate God with the best and the most pleasant life or activity. Actual human thinking is life. This is projected onto the divine level, and the highest kind of life is given to God (1072b14-26). But there is a qualification. At *N E* 1178b8-23, it is said that God cannot have a virtuous activity, say of justice, liberality, or temperance, but is only engaged in contemplation.[64] Aristotle's God has nothing external to "himself" to contemplate. Accordingly, divine contemplation describes a quality of life rather than a "spectatorial" viewing of objects existing independently of a rational agent. If God's life is contemplative, and if contemplation describes a quality of life, Aristotle can say that the life of God is an identity of *noēsis* and *noēton*, of thinking and that which is thought. It will follow that divine thinking is eternal, self-contempating life (*he theōria*, 1072b24-26). God's *energeia* is, therefore, self-contemplation activity.[65]

Consequently, at 1072b18ff., the activity associated with God is described as a thinking that thinks *itself*. This is described as a state of existence in which Reason participates in (*metalēpsin*)

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64 This distinction was not made by Socrates for whom the key property of God is *sophia*, and Socratic *sophia* is a moral-intellectual state or activity of the soul.

65 Cf. *NE* 1174b20, 1153a1, 1177a16-27. Elsewhere Aristotle writes that pure thinking is most perfect and most honourable.

and touches (*thinganōn*) the intelligible (*noētonˌ*),[66] so that it becomes identical with it.[67] Knowledge in Aristotle, as in Plato, involves a kind of self-awareness (*sunaisthenomenoi*, *N E* 1170b4). And this is implied in saying either that God thinks "himself" or that *noēsis* and *noēton* are the same. This also implies that self-knowledge is the supreme achievement and goal of intellectual activity.[68] Aristotle takes up this important theme of Plato's philosophy, adopting Plato's insights of self-knowledge for his account of divine self-knowledge, and using his account of friendship as a starting point. More on this will be said later.

Presently, let us note that in arguing to the existence of supreme Reason as the first cause of all movements Aristotle follows a philosophic tradition preceding Plato. Xenophanes (B25) made God rule the world by the thought of his Mind. Empedocles' sphere-God is a holy mind alone who darts across the whole cosmos. Anaxagoras took philosophical theology another step forward when he postulated Reason as the source of the cosmic order. He conceived Reason as the finest and purest of all things.

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66 In Plato *haptesthai* characterises man's apprehension of intelligible Forms. This apprehension occurs when the soul (*psuchē*) is in an intelligible state - *nous*. As we have already observed in the previous chapter, certain texts of Plato speak of cognition of Forms as a vision, and a sudden illumination of the soul. The cognitive experience is one of rational intuition or rational vision. See *Phdo*. 65b, *R*. 490b3. Cf. *Ti*. 37a

67 That God is an object of knowledge (*noēton*), implies the Socratic doctrine that being is knowing: *to know* virtue is *to be* virtuous. This doctrine has its roots in Parmenides' B3 according to which *to be* and *to think* are the same. But the kind of divine knowing Aristotle has in mind is active, self-contemplative knowing, a self-containing activity.

68 Heraclitus was the first to transpose the Delphic motto - Know Thyself - onto the philosophical level of knowledge of divine reality which is also the fundamental reality of the universe (B116).

It controls in particular everything which has life. In making Reason something distinct from the elements Anaxagoras was well on his way to a conception of a non-material reality. He characterised Reason as independent (*autokrates*), existing by itself (*monos autos epi eotou*), having knowledge of everything (B12). Apparently, he thought of Reason, who also orders (*diekosmēse*) everything, as unique, divine and boundless in space and time. Again, Anaxagoras, like his predecessors, made his *archē* (Reason) a living reality and a principle of motion. Reason permeates the universe by controlling it, and is immanent in living things. Diogenes of Apollonia argues from the order and teleological features of the cosmos to the existence of an intelligent, divine *archē* who controls, steers and orders everything for the best (B3, 5). Thus the precedent of a divine, rational *archē* of all things is well established.

Let us go back to our present text. Aristotle (1072b27ff.) explicitly ascribes life to God, argues that the activity of thought is life and that God is that activity but God's life is eternal (*aidios*, *aiōn*),[69] continuous (*sunechēs*), and most good (*ariston*). "For that is what God is", he concludes (1072b14-30). Cf. Diogenes of Apollonia: 'For this very thing seems to me to be a god...' (B5). Aristotle's conclusion indicates that he is working in conscious reference to preceding conceptions of God. Greek tradition, religious or philosophical, ascribes deathless life (*athanatos*) and goodness to gods or the divine, and insofar as God is the first or is

[69] Plato uses *aidios* to signify not only the eternal being of the Forms but also that of the divine stars (*Phil.* 66a; *Ti.* 37e, 40b). *Aiōn* in Homer signifies vitality and a duration of life that is continuous. Plato uses the term to denote timeless eternity, and so follows the Eleatics, the first to argue specifically for the attribution of changeless and timeless duration to Being (cf. Parmenides B5, 8).

among the first causes of all things, the universe becomes a living system of organic parts which have specific functions in it. Already in Plato the goodness of God is axiomatic. In the *Republic* (379-383) Plato criticises the way in which Greek poets describe the gods and argues that the gods must of necessity be intelligent and just and cannot do harm to anyone. In the same work, the Good is the supreme foundation of being, the model of order for the world and the supreme end of all activity. (Cf. *G*. 499e). In the *Timaeus*, the Demiurge who is essentially good, desires that all things should resemble "himself" as much as possible (29e, 30c).

Aristotle ends the chapter by denying of the first substance any attributes which imply materiality and therefore imperfection. First substance has no magnitude (*aneu megethos*), is impassive (*apathes*) and unalterable (*analloiōton*); 'for all other kinds of motion are posterior to spatial motion'. It is also not "partible" (*amerēs*) and is indivisible (*adiaereton*); 'for it causes motion for an infinite time, and nothing finite has an infinite potentiality; and therefore, since every magnitude is either finite or infinite, it cannot have finite magnitude, and it cannot have infinite magnitude because there is no such thing at all'. Here is an argument roughly presented. Aristotle, who associates magnitude with body, seems to argue that the first principle has no (bodily) size or magnitude at all. For suppose that it has size. Then it is either finite or infinite. A body of infinite size is, for him, impossible.[70] It cannot have finite size since a finite magnitude does not possess the energy to cause infinite motion in infinite

[70] Reasons for there being no infinite body were discussed in *de Caelo* I, 5-7. Cf. *Phy*. iii 5; 208a9-11

time. First substance causes infinite motion in infinite time. Therefore it is not a finite magnitude either.[71] Therefore it has no magnitude, i.e., body at all. If it has no magnitude it has no parts (*amerēs*), and if it has no parts it is indivisible (*adiaereton*).[72]

First substance is impassive (*apathes*) and unchangeable (*analloiōton*). By *"apathes"* Aristotle most probably means that the first being is not susceptible of any influence from the outside, such as heat or cold, etc., and therefore it does not age or feel pain, etc; and this in turn implies that it is not exposed to corruption.[73] For the attribution of *apathes* to the first being cf. Melissus fr. 7 (*oute algei oute aniasthai*); Plato's *Ti.* 33a-b. At *de An.* 408b29-30, *nous* is said to be impassive, and *GC* 335b29 states that things without matter are impassive. First being is also said to be changeless. The reason given, which is that all other kinds of motion are subject to spatial movement, is unclear. But it presupposes Aristotle's theory of change in the *Physics* which follows Plato's, according to which all qualitative changes depend proximately on primary, local motion, the perfect form of which is circular motion. Aristotle's point seems to be that, since first substance does not undergo any local change (*kinēsis*), it does not alter at all. *Akinētos*, therefore, excludes local movement.

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71 Jaeger (1947) thinks that these lines are intended as a refutation of Presocratic conceptions which ascribe infinity to the divine (as in Anaximander, Melissus, Anaxagoras)

72 Cf. *de An.* 407a9. Aristotle says that rational activity is not continuous in the sense in which a magnitude is.

73 Cf. 326a1; *Meta.* 1019a25ff. That *apathes* does not exclude local movement: cf. *de Caelo* 27013ff.

5 Book xii, 9

Whereas chapter 8 asks and answers the question of the possibility of a plurality of immaterial substances, chapter 9 returns to immaterial substance already established in chapter 7 as an eternal thinking. Accordingly, I discuss chapter 9 here as a logical sequel to chapter 7 and discuss chapter 8 later.

Chapter 9 (1074b15-1075a16) opens with the acknowledgement that there are difficulties about the conception of Reason as the divinest of things known to us.[74] It is further assumed that Reason must essentially be thinking, otherwise it would be no better than one who is sleeping. In Greek protreptical literature the theme of being asleep frequently occurs, and sleep is considered undesirable. Heraclitus urges men to bestir themselves from slumber and live a waking life which unites them to the rational *Logos*, the eternal truth. In the *Laws* (808b5-6) Plato also writes that a man who is asleep is no better than a corpse. Aristotle too has some negative views about sleep. In *Protr.* D101, he writes that sleep, however pleasant it is, is not a thing to choose because it removes us from the truth.[75] According to D80 only he who is waking is truly alive. Sleep is related to the lower part of man, i.e., to his vegetative function.[76]

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[74] Literally the text reads "the divinest of visible things" (*phainomenōn theiotaton*). "*Ta phainomena*" in Aristotle means "visible things", "observed facts", and sometimes, "the common view of the people". See G. E. L. Owen, in Barnes, Schofield, and Sorabji (1975, p112-126). At first sight this is strange, since Aristotle believes that "reason" is immaterial and invisible. But, like Plato before him, Aristotle calls the heavenly bodies which are divine entities and whose motions are rational "visible". Cf. *Phy.* 196a34; *Meta.* 1069a30-31. Thus the text may refer to reason visible in the behaviour of the heavenly bodies and/or in human life.

[75] But on the pleasure which sleep affords, see *Pol.* 1339a14-21

[76] *EE* 1219b18ff., 1216a3ff.

For Aristotle, as for Heraclitus and Plato, it is precisely the absence of scientific knowledge and rational self-awareness which makes sleep something imperfect and undesirable.[77] Other texts bring out the positive aspect of sleep, viz., that in sleep the soul becomes isolated from the world, and may enter into contact with the divine.[78] Aristotle strongly associates happiness or pleasure with activity, and activity is compared to a waking life. Thus he is again using human life as a model on the basis of which to explain the nature of divine life. In this context, he may be drawing on the protreptical literature as also on the philosophical background of the *Sophist* 248e-249b, where Plato maintains that perfect or complete Being (*to pantelōs on*) is something else beyond Rest and Motion, and necessarily has life and reason.[79]

In determining the nature of the activity of supreme Reason, Aristotle proceeds by exclusion: either Reason (i) does not think at all (*mēden*) or (ii) thinks but thinks something other than itself or (iii) thinks itself as its object. (i) is excluded by the doctrine that the activity of thinking is Reason's putative venerability.[80] (ii) is likewise excluded; according to Aristotle's theory of cognition, if it thinks something other than itself, that other will determine its essence, so that it will be a potentiality (*dunamis*), contrary to its nature as pure actuality. It follows also that it would not be the best substance, since it would derive its being

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[77] Cf. *NE* 1095b32-33, 1098b3-1099a2, 1102b4-7; *de An.* 412a23-26, *Meta.* 1072b17

[78] Cf. *de Philos.* fr. 12a. Also Aeschylus, *Eum.* 104.

[79] Cf. *Phil.* 11d, where Plato uses *hexis* and *dunamis* to associate, in context, happiness with the active quality of life.

[80] Here again some connection with the *Sophist* is made probable. "*Semnon*" in b18 evokes *Sophist* 249a, where Plato writes that the supreme reality cannot be venerable and holy if it is devoid of *nous*.

honourable (*timion*) from the act of thinking. The overall conclusion is, at least, that the best substance is essentially an actual thinking, and that it does not think of things outside itself. Plato sometimes ascribes being *timios* to the quality of the product of Reason's activity (e.g., *Phil.* 30b). But since it is a Platonic axiom that the quality of the product manifests the character of its cause (*Ti.* 30a), it presupposes that the supreme principle is *timios*. Likewise, Aristotle applies the term to imperishable being, and to *eudaimonia* (*NE* 1101b11). Cf *de An.* 402a; *NE* 1102a1. At *Meta.* 983a5 *timios* denotes the highest and the most divine form of knowledge, and in 1074b29 it is an attribute of Reason. In the present context, it signifies ontological perfection which commands our respect. The first two alternatives having been excluded, Aristotle now turns to the third. Here too Aristotle proceeds by exclusion, but inelegantly as though (ii) above has not been eliminated.

The real alternatives are presented in an irregular diaeresis, and may be reconstructed as follow: (i) Reason thinks itself or (ii) Reason thinks something else. If (ii), then, (iia) it thinks something which is always different, and (iib) randomly now the good now the worst or (iic) always the same and of the highest things, which are either (iid) changing or (iie) changeless. The conclusion indirectly affirms (i) by associating it with (iic) and (iie) as implying the exclusion of (ii) and (iid). (ii) is also excluded because it involves (iia) which implies (iib) and (iid). The argument begins by saying that Reason cannot engage in the process of thinking (*dianoeisthai*) some things (*eniōn*) but only that which is most divine, honourable and does not change.[81] For

[81] *Dianoeisthai* signifies the process of thinking in which analysis,

the change (*metabolē, kinēsis*)[82] will be for the worst. This depends on two basic assumptions: that Reason is a perfect instance of being and that any *kinēsis* or *metabolē* will detract from its perfection; and that change is from one quality to its opposite, and vice versa. This latter reveals both the instability, limitation and internal contrariety of changeable things. These are to be excluded from the nature of Reason. It is further argued that since *metabolē* and *kinēsis* involve potentiality, the continuity of noetic thinking would be laborious and its essence determined by its external object which would then be more honourable. Fatigue too is to be excluded from the nature of God, as Xenophanes has long argued (frr. 25, 26). Aristotle seems to say that the first being is free from change, defects or toil and pain - affections of mortal existence,[83] reminiscent of Melissus B2, 4, 5. Likewise it is free from passivity. Some Greek philosophers of whom Empedocles is outstanding held that in sensation, the percipient is passive, and receives something from the object. Aristotle's concept of cognitive passivity is close to Empedocles' but different.[84] In the *de Anima*, cognition is not passivity as such but an activity of self-realisation occasioned by the perceptive relation of the percipient with the object of perception (417b6-7). In human thinking too something analogous occurs: when human reason realises itself, it does so

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synthesis, inference, judgement, are used, whereas *noein* is a direct grasp or rational vision of the essence of things. Cf. *de An.* 408b24ff.

[82] *Metabolē* covers coming to be and pasing away, while *kinēsis* covers alteration, augmentation, and decrease. Any of these is excluded from first substance.

[83] Cf. *de Caelo* 284a14ff.

[84] Cf. *de Sensu* 439a13; *de An.* 418a3

with sensible forms received in sense-perception (403a8). The form or sensible form which provides the occasion for the exercise of human reason is thought of as, in a sense, determining reason by bringing it to actuality from what it was in potentially (*de An.* 429a13ff.). Given that divine thinking is essentially an actuality, it follows that it is completely self-determined and impassive. It follows also that God, by being a pure form, thinks itself only. This third degree thinking activity is put periphrastically as thinking of thinking, (*noēsis noēseos*, 1074b35).[85] 'Since it is the best of beings' (*to kratiston*),[86] and its activity is unchanging and eternal, God thinks the best thing - "itself" - eternally.[87]

Given the foregoing, Aristotle's next move (1074a36) which appears to repeat issues already argued, is logically surprising. It is not so surprising if it is seen as raising further questions about the nature of divine self-knowledge. He says that knowledge (*epistēmē*), perception (*aisthēsis*), opinion (*doxa*), and understanding (*dianoia*)[88] seem to be always of something else,

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[85] Cf. *de An.*, 413b32-33.

[86] 1074b35. Xenophanes used "*kratiston*" to characterise God as the most powerful of beings. In Plato's dialogues the term not only signifies the most perfect being but also the most powerful (*Ti* 40a; *Laws* 895b). The term is very suited to stress that the first being is not influenced by other things. It is also a verbal reminder of the religious background of the conception of God as a supreme power.

[87] *Meta.* 1074b33-1075a10. R. Norman (1969), "Aristotle's Philosopher-God", *Phronēsis*, xiv, p. 63-74, maintains that in "thinking itself", Aristotle 'is simply describing the same activity that human minds perform when they engage in abstract thought'. But Norman's thinking that the first mover is 'a sort of heavenly Narcissus, who looks round for the perfection he wishes to contemplate, finds nothing to rival his own self' presupposes that the first mover can first know things other than itself. However, the very opposite of Norman's presupposition is what Aristotle is at pains to establish: divine knowledge is self-contained.

[88] The enumeration of these types of cognition recalls the levels of

and only concomitantly of themselves (cf. *de An.* 429b5-9). One possible reason for this move is the Platonic view that man, unlike deity, does not have direct self-knowledge: rational self-knowledge is mediated by *logos*, whereas God, the philosopher *par excellence*, is the reality which is by definition an eternal knower of intelligible Forms (*Ti.* 28a).

Aristotle raises further the question that if, as seems to be the case, thinking and the object of thought are different, in what consists the well-being (*to eu*) of divine thinking? This question is obscure, but it presupposes a well-developed theory of happiness according to which to be happy also consists in being known by others. At *EE* 1245b14-19, Aristotle writes that friendship is an essential element of human happiness, because by knowing other people they become fully aware of themselves.[89] On the basis of this belief, Aristotle developed his theory of *antiphilia*, i.e., of mutual relationship and intimacy.[90] One must not only love but also be loved, and friends should know their mutual feelings. Over and against an opinion which made friendship benevolence, Aristotle pointed out that friendship is communion. In the *Symposium*, Plato implies that true friendship, born out of divine madness, is a spiritual union of two souls in search of wisdom. In the case of God, Aristotle seems to argue, there is a special problem because for him *antiphilia* does not seem possible. For in deity to know and to be known coincide, and thus also to love and be loved. At *EE* vii 12, it appears that the truly happy man does not need friends. This is particularly

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cognition on Plato's divided line in the *Republic*. Cf. also *Parm.* 142a

[89] Cf. *NE* 1170a32-b

[90] *EE* 1236a14-15, b3-4

manifest in the case of God. This conception of God, about which we shall speak later, apparently raises serious moral questions about God's relation to the world. The text next reiterates what had gone before: it amounts to showing that even in some productive sciences which disregard matter the object of thought is an essence (*ousia*), while in the speculative sciences, the formula and the act of thinking are one. The implicit conclusion is that divine thinking is of a pure kind far removed from matter, and that it is the same as the object of thought. Therefore, God's well-being is self-contained. The last but interesting *aporia* raised about the nature of divine thinking is whether its object, viz., itself, is composite (*suntheton*).

In answer, it is implied that if the object of thought is composite, the thinking mind is a potentiality, and involves discursive reasoning or, as Aristotle puts it, thinks by moving from one part of the whole to another. This, it seems, is characteristic of us as composite beings. But, in contrast, God's thinking, which is pure form, does not involve inference, judgement or analysis; it is spaceless absolute insight of eternal duration: 'just as the human thinking or that of composite beings is in a certain space of time (for it attains the good which is other than itself, not in this or that time, but in the whole period of time), so is absolute self-thinking in eternity' (1075a11). In this passage, Aristotle assumes that supreme goodness or happiness (*to eu* or *to ariston*) is rational activity of the sort whose highest and eternal expression is God. If this recalls the definition of happiness in *NE* 1098a16-16-20, then the main contrast between the thinking of compositely rational beings and divine self-thinking is that, although

indivisible minds are involved in both cases, it takes the human mind a lifetime of the highest intellectual activity of which it is capable to attain divine happiness (cf. *NE* 1177b25), whereas divine activity is *per se* eternally a happy life, since its very nature is absolutely free of any material component which might impede the identity of its thinking activity and the object of thought.[91]

Is divine *noēton* then a bare unit or something else? Does the identification of agent and object of thought mean that the "thinking of thinking" is objectless? At 1072a32ff. divine Thinking (*noēsis*) is said to be simple (*haplē*), although this is further explained as involving not numerical determination - not the One - with reference to an ontology attributed to Plato by Aristotle - but a state of existence. At *Meta.* 1059b35 that which is simpler is said to be more of a principle than that which is not.[92] Some illumination of this problem is provided by the *de Anima* (430b14), where Aristotle describes the object of knowledge as indivisible, not quantitatively but qualitatively in form, and is grasped in an indivisible time with an indivisible part of the soul. Yet, leaving out of account the quantitative aspect of things altogether in order to reach their unity would seem to make such unity empty and abstract. Such an account would be securing unity not by synthesis but by the omission of difference and multiplicity. If one should proceed further in this direction, simplicity will not be that of a whole which is undivided because

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91 Cf. *Pol.* 1323b20-24.

92 We encounter "*haplous*" in connection with Anaxagoras' theory of Reason (*de An.* 405a16-17). The atomists may have made use of the term by asserting that simple atoms are the ultimate elements of reality (A135). Although the term is not prominent in Plato, a few significant texts occur. E.g., in *R.* 380d, God is said to be *haplous*.

no part of it is conceivable without the rest, but that of a bare identity which is one with itself because it has no content at all. This exclusion of the quantitative from the unity of the pure form creates a suspicion that Aristotle is seeking a unity by way of abstraction. This suspicion is confirmed by what he says in the obscure context of the following passage (430b22ff.) in which he seems to be answering the objection that pure forms cannot be simple because they have negatives or opposites which are apprehended by the act of reasoning by which we grasp the forms themselves. Aristotle would have to answer, consistently with his conception of cognition, that the opposites or negatives of the pure forms exist only in the phenomenal world, in the region of matter and change. Hence also passive reason apprehends the negatives or opposites of the forms along with them, insofar as it has a material or sensible basis and therefore itself belongs to the world of change. But for the essentially active reason no such opposition or negation can exist. It has no connection with matter, and therefore no alternative potentialities. In its pure intuitive energy, it is simply positive or affirmative of itself and has not to deal with the negative even as a possibilty.

If the foregoing is true, then, while we may concede that the critical passage is obscure, we can reasonably expect Aristotle to mean that all opposition or differences in thought are merely relative, and that they imply the unity of the reason which grasps them as a whole. On this view, Aristotle will not be dismissing negation and opposition as unreal or as not involved in pure thought. He will only be contending that they are never to be taken as absolute negation or opposition. The objection to this is

that, in his whole discussion of the Law of Contracdiction, Aristotle seems to lay all the emphasis upon the mutual exclusiveness of the affirmative and the negative.[93] Moreover, notice the comparison which Aristotle draws (430b26ff.) between the intuition by which reason apprehends the pure forms of things, and the apprehension by the special sense(s) of the "special object" (*tou idiou*) - implying that such apprehension is a simple, indivisible act independent of all judgement or inference, and therefore exempt from the possibility of error. Aristotle seems to forget that even the "special sensibles" cannot be apprehended without discrimination, or without mental processes. Perhaps, it is still possible to object that the *de Anima* deals with human reason and not the pure reason of God.

Anyhow, the *Meta* xii text appears to exclude from God any knowledge of things which are not "himself", for this would make God passive and dependent on things outside itself. Again, in Aristotle's division of philosophy into various sciences of increasing universality and abstraction - physics, mathematics, theology - supreme knowledge remains entirely concerned with the apprehension of immaterial and eternal first principles, and does not necessarily involve their causality in as far as they produce certain effects. If this is so, the first being as knower of itself would not even know about the world. Such an inference, on the other hand, is astonishing, since it would take away from

[93] There are three forms - (i) ontological, (ii) logical and (iii) psychological - in which Aristotle formulates his Law of Contradiction in the *Metaphysics*: (i) The same property cannot belong and not belong to a single object at the same time (1005b19-20); (ii) Two contradictory propositions cannot be true at the same time (1011b13-14); (iii) Two beliefs which answer to two contradictory sentences cannot exist at the same time in a single consciousness (1005b23-24).

the first principle something which, as a principle of other things it should possess. Moreover, certain texts clearly imply that the supreme being must have knowledge of all things. To remind ourselves, Aristotle had stated that God is the cause of all things and a principle, and *sophia* is said to belong especially to God. But *sophia*, for all we know, implies a state of mind which knows first principles. This would suggest that if God knows "himself", he knows all things as their principle. We also noted that Aristotle ridicules Empedocles for implying that his supreme sphere-God is not completely wise because its nature excludes one of Empedocles' first principles, Strife. From these texts, it seems that neither the simplicity of divine thinking nor the identity of *nous* and *noēton* necessitates exclusion of all knowledge of the world from God. But the issue is complicated and will be discussed further in the final section.

Now the nature of God has been described as life and thought. Thought is regarded as the more known to us, for thinking is given as the reason for the presence of life in the immaterial substance. What reason is given for the presence of actual thinking in this substance?[94] The answer has to be negative as far as the *Metaphysics* itself is concerned. But the discussion sums up, and quite evidently presupposes Aristotle's overall explanation of cognition as articulated in the *de Anima*. There, as we remember, cognition results from the reception of a form without its matter.[95] A form in matter means a material thing.

[94] 1072b23. In Plato's *Sophist* (248e-249a), the presence of thought in perfect being is accepted as though unavoidable, and from it the presence of life is shown to follow, as it follows for Aristotle. But no reason for the necessary presence of thought is stated by Plato except an emotional reaction against its absence.

It exists in matter independently of being perceived or known. Form without matter, accordingly, means cognition. Where it exists, it knows. It is a thinking. Negatively, it is described as immaterial. But positively, it is represented in terms of the cognition of which one is reflexively aware as one knows and thinks. This positive side of Aristotle's notion of immaterial being explains why, against the background of his general doctrine of cognition, he can so easily take for granted that immaterial substance is cognitive and on that basis show that it is living and deduce the type of living it enjoys.

6 Book xii, 8

With immaterial substance established in this way, chapter 8 asks whether there is just one such substance or more than one, and if more, how many. The answer is apparently internally inconsistent, and it is a moot question whether this chapter as a whole or a part of it really belongs to book xii.[96] The answer according to the first part of the chapter is that it depends on the number of original motions observable in the heavens. According to one astronomer (Eudoxus) twenty-six would be required, according to another (Callippus) thirty-three, while further precisions bring the exact number to fifty-five or at least, forty-seven. A plurality of eternal (*aidious*), immovable (*akinētous*)

[95] *De An.* 424a17-24; 425b23-26; 432a4-9. Though one could not perceive the sensible form except as embedded in matter: 'for even if perception is of "the such" and not of individuals, yet one necessarily perceives an individual, and at a definite place and time' (*Post. An.* 87b28-30).

[96] By some this passage has been considered an insert that does not cohere with the rest of the chapter, e.g., Jaeger (1934, chp. 14). In defence of the coherence of the chapter as a whole, see Philip Merlan (1946, p.12)

and immaterial (*aneu megethous*) substances is accordingly required (1073a38-b1).

In the next sentence, Aristotle says that there is a certain relation among the movers such that one is first, another second, and so on corresponding to the order of the motions of the heavenly bodies. Aristotle does not discuss the question of whether the 55 movers form as many distinctly thinking realities besides the first mover or are formal elements in it or are something different. Nor does he discuss the question of whether the movers of the heavenly spheres and bodies are in relation of efficient causality with what they move, as is apparently the case in *Phy*. viii, and if so whether they are locally present in the spheres and bodies or whether they too move as being desired. What is fairly clear is that an ordinal relation is inserted among the ummoved movers involving a hierarchy of final causality; the higher mover serving as a *telos* (an end) for the lower.[97] The unmoved movers are associated with beings that are essentially impassive and are in enduring condition of goodness[98] - and

[97] Owens (1950, pp. 319-337), argues that the 55 movers have a distinct substance of their own which, ontologically, is on the same level as the first mover. On the other hand, K. Oehler (1968), in *Gnomon* 40, 641-653, thinks that the other movers are on a lower level than the first mover. So too Clark (1975, V.3.14ff.), who points out that whereas the Prime Mover and the planetary movers are both characterised as immovable in themselves, the former but not the latter is said to be, in addition, immovable accidentally. By calling the planetary movers "lesser movers" (section 14), he implies that the difference in characterisation gives a status to the Prime mover which is superior to the planetary movers; hence, these other movers are subordinate to the Prime Mover.

[98] '*...tou aristou tetuchēkuian telos...*' The text uses a perfect participle tense for what I translate as being in an "enduring condition of goodness". Aristotle does not, I believe, intend to say that these immovable substances acquire their goodness, which would imply that they are not eternal actualities.

these are the grounds for their being *telē*, i.e., final causes (1074a20-22). 1074a18-24 and a28 seem to argue that a sublunar motion must depend on a celestial motion as its mover and end, and all motions must have the motion of the stars as their mover and that for the sake of which they move (although 1074a25-28 inconsistently, perhaps by a slip, makes the moved the end of the mover). Since final causality is invoked to block the threat of infinite regress in causation (1074a30), it would be reasonable to infer - with reference to the ordinal relations - that all the separate movers, whatever they are, are *finally* and *formally* moved by one unmoved mover as their *telos*. Somehow, this move will harmonise this first part of the chapter with the argument in the second part and also with the preceding and subsequent chapters.

The second part of the chapter begins (1074a32ff.) by asserting that the heaven (*ouranos*) is one universe, not multiplied like individuals in a species, and argues to the existence of a formally and numerically unique[99] first mover. The argument, some of whose assumptions are, in context, unarticulated Aristotelian doctrines, is restated somewhat as follows:

(1) Matter is a principle of individuation.[100]

(2) Form is a principle of unity.

(3) If there is a plurality of xs their individual principles will *formally* be one in kind. Therefore,

(4) all the heavens are *formally* one heaven (by 2 and 3).

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[99] 1070a31-39. Cf. also *Phy*. 259a6-15.

[100] See *Meta*. 1016a32-33, 1035b30-31. While often taking matter to be a principle of individuation, Aristotle elsewhere appears to consider form the principle of individuation; e.g., *Meta*. 999b21, 1038b13.

Therefore,

(5) There is only one heaven! (1074a31), by (1) - (4).

(6) That which is eternally and continuously moving is one.[101]

(7) The heaven is continuously and eternally moving. Therefore,

(8) There is only one heaven! by (6) and (7).

(9) Item (7) implies the existence of (a) first mover(s).

(10) First movers are immaterial. Therefore,

(11) There is formally one first mover (1074a35), by 2 and 3

(5) and (8) are invalid. Aristotle could only validly say that there is, *in form*, only one heaven. Form is a cause. But the heaven has a material component and so is possibly many. But even if materially many, there will be a single form of heavens. At any rate, the argument that plurality involves matter is inconsistent with the view that there are 55 immaterial movers; for the existence of form as a principle of unity and the absence of material component imply that all immaterial movers are one.[102] From these considerations, we may argue that the two parts of chapter 8 are not systematically connected with the kind of argument that would validate the inference that there is only one first mover, though I shall assume such a unique first mover from a formal point of view.[103]

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[101] An argument from motion for a unique first mover is also offered at *GC*. 337a17-22: 'But if there is to be movement, there must be something which initiates it: if there is to be movement always, there must always be something which initiates it; if the movement is to be continuous what initiates it must be single, unmoved, ungenerated, and incapable of alteration; and if the circular movements are more than one, they must all of them, in spite of their plurality, be in some way subordinated to a single principle'. Cf. *de Caelo* 279a9-11.

[102] Aristotle and Plato are subject to the perennial question of how an *immaterial* mover causes eternal and continuous motion of the apparently material heaven.

[103] It would be possible to argue that the question of the authenticity of

Aristotle was anxious to save the phenomena of the variety of celestial movements. But having caustically dismissed Platonic Forms, he canvasses no plausible alternative of the principles which govern these different motions. In Plato's *Timaeus*, the governing principle of the cosmos, cosmic-soul, is constitutive of the greatest kinds of Forms: Being, Sameness and Difference. The stars and planets *are* divine realities who embody the perfection of cosmic-soul in their circular and rotary motions; and all the various celestial motions are reducible to Sameness and Difference. Thus the great variety and orderly continuity of the heavenly motions some of which give rise to the chronological marks - seasons, weather, the calender month, the year, day and night - are all accounted for by tracing their fundamental causes to divine first principles. It is unclear how Aristotle's formally unique first mover relates to the different planetary movers, or by what nature it explains all the varieties of celestial motions.

By *"ouranos"* Aristotle probably means the first heaven, i.e., the sphere of the fixed stars, but also everything included within the extremity of its conceived circumference as in *de Caelo* (278b10-21). Here heaven is considered as the vehicle of the activity of the first mover, the argument being that the first mover is one and has a never-changing activity with only one direct effect; the movement of the first heaven.[104]

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chapter 8 must refer to the chapter as a whole, which seems to embody just one argument with an Aristotelian conclusion of a finite world and a finite first mover. There is a presumption for regarding the question of plurality of first movers as hypothetical, even as dialectical; first assume a plurality of first movers - which are pure forms - and then deduce their formal incongruity; for their existence threatens the appearance of the third man, i.e., if pure form is a principle of unity.

104 *De Caelo* i, 8 and 9 also deal with the question of the plurality of worlds,

Chapter 8 ends with an evaluation of the ancient mythological tradition according to which "*these* are gods and the divine permeates (*periechei*) the whole of nature" (1074b2-3).[105] Since the divine is alive, the universe is animate if it is permeated by the divine (cf. *de Caelo* 285a29-30) a conclusion common to the Presocratics and Plato. In the clause under consideration, the demonstrative pronoun, "these" (*houtoi*) is masculine, apparently by attraction to the preceding masculine predicate "gods" (*theoi*). On this account its antecedent is not immediately obvious grammatically. It could be the neuter "divine bodies" at 1074a30-31 (*theion ti sōmaton*) or the feminine "many" in reference to the "first principle" (*archē*) of each of such body at a33. It could accordingly mean, as far as the grammar is concerned, either the heavenly bodies or the separate movers. It seems taken up again in the subsequently mentioned "first substances" at 1074b9 (*tas prōtas*). The tradition that the "first substances" are gods (b9), Aristotle concludes, has a kernel of enduring truth. This will be the truth now made manifest by Aristotelian first philosophy. However, such a tradition, as Plato implies in his philosophical cosmology, refers to the heavenly

and advance a number of arguments against this assumption. Plato at *Ti.* 31a argues for one visible universe from the standard-establishing property of uniqueness of the Form (of Animal) in which the cosmos participates and from the Form-sensible participation thesis.

105 The view that the divine "encompasses all and steers all things" is regarded by Aristotle as going back to Anaximander and as common to the Greek philosophers of nature. See *Phy.* 203b5-15. "Permeates", rather than "encompasses", is more expressive of the intended meaning of "*periechei*", since the divine *archē* of all things is effectively the essence of all things and thus permeates them. This meaning, as my introduction suggests, has its roots in traditional region, where the universe originated from a divine source and is itself full of the divine.

bodies or to the celestial sphere and not to supra-celestial reality which, in Plato, is represented by the Forms and in Aristotle by *Nous*. To these supra-celestial realities, the heaven and its inhabiting gods are logically subordinate. Accordingly the notion of "first substances" should consist in the celestial beings and their moving forces, excluding *Nous*.[106] Nevertheless, it is taken as implying that these substances are intelligent beings who desire the perfection of the first mover. Anthropomorphism and the like are, again, explicitly rejected (b5-10), while the notion of the divine meets the requirement of traditional religion as something that pervades all nature. The term "god", therefore, seems applied here expressly to the material heavens and their motivating forces, and both have the status of intelligent beings.

7 Book xii, 10

The concluding chapter 10 deals with the principal issue of how the nature of the universe (*hē tou holou phusis*) has (*echei*) the Good (*to agathon*) or the supreme Good (*to ariston*) - whether as the order or rank (*taxis*) of the universe or as something separate (*kechōresmenon ti*) and independent (*auto kath' hauto*).[107] The answer lies partly in either disjunct. This is

[106] Hesiod considered the heavens the dwelling place of the gods (*Theogony*, 126-128). However, if the ancients Aristotle has in mind predate Hesiod, then it is highly doubtful whether Aristotle is right, since, although the stars and planets may have been long acknowledged divinities, they were not probably associated with gods of popular religion until in classical times. On the other hand, if Aristotle means that the ancients identified gods with the primary natural forces, he would be right.

[107] "*auto kath' hauto*" in context evokes the ontology of Platonic Forms, and in particular the Good in *R*. vi and vii.

illustrated by the analogy of an army and its general: "for the efficiency of the army depends partly on the order and partly on the general, but chiefly on the latter. Because he does not depend on the order but the order depends on (*dia touton*) him (1075a14-16). The Pythagoreans had laid great stress on the order inherent in the cosmos. This order is the model to which man must conform his life, his house and his city.[108] In his *Gorgias* (506d-e), Plato develops this Pythagorean doctrine and makes it his own. At *Ti.* 30a, Plato describes *taxis* as the effect of God's activity, a view echoed in *de Philosophia*, fr. 19c Ross: 'it is proper to God to turn disorder into order'. At *EE* 1218a20-24, Aristotle connects order with rest and says that things are beautiful because of their order. Since, of the things we perceive, those which are good are characterised by order and rest, unchanging things will be so even more.

These views of the Good are complemented by the view in the chapter under consideration, viz., the Good of the universe might also be both its immanent order *and* its "transcendent" principle of order, but principally the latter, just as the good of an army lies in the general and in the order and discipline of the army, but more so in the former than in the latter, since a general *qua* commander embodies the order of his army. A similar military illustration is found in *de Philo.* fr. 12 (Ross), in which Aristotle describes how an observer on Mount Ida would see the army of the Greeks advance in marvellous order in the plain below, and conclude that a general must have arranged it in this way. There is, however, a difficulty with the analogy, as with nearly all analogies. The notion of a general denotes the substantial

[108] Iamblichus, *Vita Pyth.* 48

embodiment of an order of relations whose actuality is the *de facto* presence of an army, which is a systematic unit of individuals of which one is a commander. Now Aristotle describes the essential source of order as something separate (*kechōrismenon ti*) and independent (*auto kath' hauto*). Indeed, a general is ontologically separable and independent, in the sense that he is not in the rank and file of soldiers, or he can be killed while his army remain intact for a time or his army can be routed while he remains. Would this apply to first mover and the universe? Hardly. The difficulty just raised takes Aristotle to have a physicalist assumption in invoking the analogy; viz., that he has in mind the physical constitution of the army, among other things. An argument that this may not the case may be gleaned from one of the closing passages of the chapter:

> Further, if there is nothing else besides sensible things, (*ta aisthēta*) there will be no first principle (*archē*), no order (*taxis*), no generation (*genesis*), and no celestial motions...[109]

That is, sensible things in the cosmos are such that there must be something apart from them if their order, motion and generation are to be accounted for. *"Archē"* ambiguously means "rule", "source", "beginning" or "cause". No sense seems excluded here, except that if matter and form are eternal existents, *archē qua* cause of substantial existence is excluded. Associating *archē* with *taxis* and *genesis*, then, suggests that an account of the generative and orderly relation of existing things in the cosmos *logically* presuppose a distinct reality which is an actuality, given the potentiality of the sensible things.[110] In Aristotle's jargon,

[109] Op. cit. 1075b25-29.

then, the first mover would be what it is for the cosmos to be such as it is; it is logically prior to, entails the organisation or form of, and ontologically completes, phemonenal existence.[111]

Were that to be the case, the moral of the army analogy would be this: just as a general *qua* commander implies the order of relations and movements of preexisting individuals constituting an army of which he is the chief member, so too the first mover implies the dynamic order, i.e., the formal and final structure of the cosmos of which "he" is the chief part. In this way, all existing things form a comprehensive teleological system:

> All things, both fishes and birds and plants are ordered together in some way but not in the same way: and the whole system is not such that there is no relation between one thing and another. There is a definite connection. The arrangement is like that in a household where the free persons have all or most of their actions pre-ordained for them, whereas the slaves and animals have little common responsibility, and act for the most part at random; for the nature of each class is a principle such as we have described. I mean, for example, that everything must, at least, come to a dissolution, and similarly, there are other respects in which everything contributes to the good of the whole...*the good is in the truest sense a principle of all things.*[112]

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[110] Something like this inference is drawn by Aristotle himself elsewhere in the case of "*genesis*": 'For all perceptible things perish and are in movement. But that which comes to be and that from which it comes to be must be something; and the ultimate term in the series cannot have come to be, since the series has a limit and since nothing can come to be out of that which is not' (*Meta.* 999b5-9). This sounds like an argument from logical regression to a first principle.

[111] These intimate conditions of primacy consistent with those laid down in *Meta.* 7, where substance is said to be primary (i) in formula, (ii) in order of knowledge and (iii) in time. To be primary in knowledge also means to be the final truth, and "in time" implies the logical priority of a principle to that of which it is a principle.

[112] Ibid., 1075a15-38. Aristotle's statement that 'the Good is in the truest

The apparent multiplicity of things have, in the long-run, a single, internally moral, aesthetic or teleological cohesion.[113] But although all things have been ordered and set in an organised whole, they are so ordered in different ways; 'for the nature of each class is a principle'. It is also implied that certain parts of the cosmos contribute less to the common good than others. The household analogy is difficult. But it may be seen as an oblique reference to Aristotle's tripartite levels of reality. The analogy contains Aristotle's idea of the evolutionary development of theoretical studies mentioned in chapter one of the *Metaphysics*. There (980a28ff.), it was surmised that the science that speculates about first principles is possible in a condition of leisurely existence. Hence, it emerges where sciences for the production of subsistence needs have been adequately developed to meet the exigencies of life. Only above this level of development, is mental energy available for higher thoughts about first principles. This would suggest, in our present context, that free agents, like masters, are those who, having leisure, are inclined to higher thoughts, and are therefore paradoxically constrained to devote attention the intellectual pursuit of fixed principles like *the* Good, while slaves work to fulfil basic but *fleeting* needs, and hence are involved in random activities. Each class of being contributes to

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sense *the* principle of all things' (1075a38) and his apparent identification of the Good with the first being shows, among other things, the extent to which he was working in conscious reference to Plato's thought and/or Academic discussions. Cf. *Phdo* 99c5-6: 'that it is the Good or Binding that genuinely does bind and hold all things together, they do not believe at all'.

[113] In Greek culture what is good, orderly and beautiful are, in the final analysis, inseparable. At least this is Plato's view.

the good of the whole in pursuing what are apparently distinct ends.

As an illustration of Aristotle's theological cosmos, the master-slave analogy, like that of the commander and the army, is not apt. But if we ignore the difficulties, the point is to intimate the structural and causal hierarchy between the first mover, celestial and sublunar realities, and to indicate the value of contribution made by each of these realities to the goodness and order of the cosmos: the celestial realities are, it seems, in efficient and final causality to sublunar things by being attracted to the *energeia* of the first mover. Thus the relation between the terms is systematic and orderly. But by their respective natures, it is clear that in order of causal value the first mover, by being prior to all comes first, then the celestial realities, then sublunary realities. From this point of view, it is clear how the cosmos contains the Good: it does so in virtue of its attraction to the supreme perfection of the Good through the celestial sphere. Since the object of desire is pure Reason, the attraction of the cosmos is orderly and systematic. What is not clear is why or whether these army and houshold analogies are meant to show that the first mover exists or must exist as *kechōrismenon ti kai auto kath' hauto*. I shall argue shortly, to the effect that the existential status of the first mover is derived independently of the analogies.

In the second half of the chapter, Aristotle shows to what extent theories of first principles, different from his own, are mistaken. It consists of two parts. The first section (1075a25-b16) deals with theories which posit contrary principles as the last ground of

being. In the second section (b16-1076a4) Aristotle implies that this type of theory cannot explain why there is always becoming in the cosmos, unless his thesis that there must be something else besides the contraries is adopted. In this part the sentences are terse, and it is difficult to understand which or whose doctrine is envisaged. But there are a few points of theological interest, though these too are dealt with perfunctorily. One of the criticisms of Empedocles is that he makes Strife an eternal principle. It is suggested that the eternity of Strife is impossible *because* it is an evil. It is not clear at first why Aristotle considers this impossible and contradictory. However, for him, evil is not something which exists by itself, but a defect of contingent things. Evil is a characterisation of one of the contraries of change, such as destruction (*Meta.* 1051a4-22). Hence it cannot always be. Aristotle implies, therefore, that his first substance, which he associates with the Good, has no opposing principle, contrary to Plato for whom body is the principle of irrational necessity,[114] and a condition of evil which divine Reason must persuade towards order and goodness for a cosmos to be.

From the teleological point of view, Aristotle castigates Empedocles' Love and Strife, and Anaxagoras' Reason. These cosmologies postulate first principles which have a potentiality to act, and so offend the test of pure actuality. Also those first principles are so conceived that the Good becomes extraneous to them, and this intimates a failure on their part to see that 'the art of medicine is, in some sense, health' (1075b10). This medical analogy has the tendency of attributing a kind of efficacious

[114] *Ti.* 47eff.

causality to the Good: for the idea of health is the effective cause from which originates a doctor's art and which enables him to undertake the treatment of his patients. It is then implied that it is precisely the goodness of the first being from which all movements in the cosmos originate, and in which all cosmic order is precontained. Does this imply efficient causality on the part of God? This question will be re-opened in the next section.

Apart from teleology, Aristotle also argues from formal necessity for the finitude of the universe and against theories of first principles that imply infinite regress:

> ... in virtue of what are numbers, the soul and the body or in general, the form and the object, one? It is the moving cause that makes them one ... those who make mathematical number first principles, and go on generating one substance after another and find different principles for each one...give us a great many governing principles ... The rule of the many is not good. 'Let there be one ruler' (1075b35-1076b4).

"Let there be one ruler" is quoted from *Il.* ii, 204. Discussions of the theory that numbers are the highest level of reality and that each successive level of reality has its own principles occur at *Meta.* 1090a7-16, b13-21 and 1028b21-24 where he adds that it was held by Speusippus. According to Aristotle, Speusipus, aware of the difficulties of the theory of Forms, abandoned Platonic Forms but held that numbers are the subsistent entities, argued that numbers do not have any causal influence upon other things, and that the other levels of reality - spatial magnitude, soul, sensible things - each exist by themselves. Each successive level is more perfect than the preceding one, so that they may be said to be only analogically similar to each other. Aristotle calls this, a

poorly composed play (*epeisodiōdē*). He believes that unity of purpose is imparted by the Good as a ruling cause (*archē*); and logical necessity ensures that the different levels of reality of which form, matter, soul, and number are elements are bound together into a structural finitude. All things are one if, from our discussions so far, essences of things relate to the first mover in a systematic way. Let us summarise and examine briefly the results of our discussions of *Meta* xii.

8 Summary

As we have seen, *Meta.* xii contains a highly philosophical argument to the existence and nature of god(s). The terms "god" and "divine" are applied to both the heavenly bodies and their movers, to the first mover and, it would also seem, to thought universally.[115] The visible cosmos comprises both sublunar and celestial spheres which are permeated by immaterial, divine substance on which they depend as their first principle (1072b14). Hence they participate in the divine.[116] The traditional background of Aristotle's theology, which is basically not different from Plato's, is ultimately the basis of this thesis. But Aristotle conceives divine nature as pure cognition which amounts to eternal self-contemplation. This is the highest life; for

[115] 1074b15-16. Cf. *de An.* 408b29-30 and *EN.*1177a12-16.

[116] Cicero, *de Nat. Deo.*, 1, 13, 33, sees confusion in Aristotle in his *de Philo.*: 'for now he ascribes all divinity to mind, now he says that the world itself is a god ... now the movement of the world ... Then, he says the heat of the heavens is a god, not realising that the heavens are a part of the world, which he has himself elsewhere called a god'. But Cicero is presumably unaware that "god", for the Greeks, is a predicative notion that applies to any reality which satisfies a set of conditions including causal supremacy, eternality, immortality, perfection

it is described as the happiest and pleasantest form of existence. Divine nature is free from jealousy and is essentially good, for God is *the* Good. In its highest instance it is separate from matter and therefore completely devoid of potentiality. On the basis of the analysis of cognition, a separate form is shown to be in its very nature a thinking of thinking, unable to change its thought to any other object. God is regarded as a ruling power that is most honourable, and the primary cause of things in the cosmos. God causes motion by way of final causality directly, but through the motion of the first heaven it is the efficient cause of all further effects produced. These philosophical notions of God are presented as identical with the kernel of Greek religious and mythological traditions.

The first mover causes movements and changes in the cosmos by being loved and desired. Aristotle seems to specify final causality as the only causality fitting for God. But are other types of causality excluded because they are not mentioned? No reason seems given in the text why pure actuality cannot function as an efficient cause, except that it is an Aristotelian doctrine that the actuality of the efficient cause is in the thing undergoing the action.[117] If so, it would mean that the first mover would, as efficient cause, have its actuality outside itself. This would be in contradiction to its nature as pure actuality.[118] The new actuality brought about by its activity lies therefore outside itself as cause.

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[117] *de An.* 426a5-6; *Meta.* 1050a30-31; 1066a26-34 (= *Phy.* 1202a13-b22)

[118] *Phy.* 255a1-b24. The action of an efficient cause is regarded as a perfection that is always present and that produces its effect upon contact with the *passum* and the removal of hindrances. Thinking is specifically included among the activities that take place at once on the removal of the hindrance (b3-5; 22-23).

If the first mover were an efficient cause, then, it would be in potentiality to something else. The emphasis in locating the causality of the first mover solely in being loved and desired seems to be sufficient indication that what is ordinarily understood as the cause of movement and production,[119] i.e., the efficient cause, does not enter the picture here.[120]

The heavenly bodies are held to be immortal and eternal. Consequently, there is no question of looking for an efficient and final cause to account for their production. Both the matter and form of these beings as well as sublunar things are presupposed (*Meta.* 1034b7-16, 1069b35). Sublunar things are produced through change, having their efficient causes in both the immediate agents - internal or external, as for instance man engenders man, and the heavenly bodies. Elsewhere we learn that inanimate bodies exist for the sake of living things, and plants and animals for the sake of man.[121] Through the perpetuation of their species they attain the divine. Changeable things, such as earth and fire, are described as imitating the imperishable ones, namely, 'the sun and stars and the whole heaven' (1050b22-29). But the texts make it quite clear that this

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[119] The doctrine of separate intellect in *de An.*430a10-19, raises a difficulty in this regard. There the language used to describe the influence of this intellect on the passive intellect is the language of efficient causality. The notion is tempered, however, by the description of the "producing" as a state: '... there is another which is what it is by virtue of producing all things; this is a sort of positive state like light; for in a sense light makes potential colours into actual colours' (a15-17). Aristotle does not seem to have any means of explaining how the causal contact is made between separate, immaterial substance and material substance.

[120] *Phy.* 259a6-8. The primary efficient mover is contradistinguished from the primary cause of motion by way of final causality at *Phy.* 243a-4.

[121] *Pol.* 1256b15-22.

imitation or participation takes place insofar as the lower things strive to attain as best they can the permanence and activity exhibited by the divine beings.[122] It seems, therefore, that God is not an internal constituent of other natures; not as a material and intrinsic formal cause, but as purely and solely a final cause.

Does Aristotle really intend this conclusion? If he intends it, does he succeed in the exclusive attribution of final causality to God? Or is he merely inconsistent? Or did he undergo a change in beliefs between *Meta.* xii and other treatises including other parts of the *Metaphysics*? One cannot hope to give any satisfactory answers to these questions on the basis of the texts. Certainly materiality is ruled out of God's nature by strong argument. But can efficient and formal causality be completely ruled out? Is not the first mover a pure *form* of Reason? That a first mover may not be purely a final cause and may also be in efficient contact with the world is intimated in the *Physics*, where the mover of the first heaven is established at the circumference of the spherically conceived universe. At *G C* 323a30-33, Aristotle explains final causality by saying: 'Hence, if anything imparts motion without itself being moved, it may touch the moved and yet itself be touched by nothing; for we say sometimes that the man who grieves touches us, but we do not touch him'. Could a change in a psychological state generated in a sympathising agent be an efficient effect? At *de Caelo* 271a33, Aristotle sometimes speaks as if nature is a divine, immanent force: "God and nature (*phusis*) create nothing that has not its use"; cf. *PA*. 645a9ff. where nature is conceived as an immanent

[122] See *G C*. 336b27-337a7.

force which underlies the order of the world (cf. also *Pol.* 132a32, *NE* 1153b32). In the theology of *Meta* xii, the divine is said to pervade (*periechei*) the whole world, which is impossible for a strictly transcendent God (1074b3). Cf. *GC.* 336b31, where God is said to have 'fulfilled (*sumplērōse*) the perfection of the universe... that perpetual coming-to-be be the closest approximation to eternal being'. The emphasis is on "fulfilled". There is also Aristotle's concept of the Good illustrated by the analogy of the general and the army. The nature of the universe is said to *echei* the Good, which chiefly depends on the first mover just as the order of the army depends, *dia touton*, chiefly on the general. Now "*dia touton*" could mean order "*effected by him*", i.e., the general, so that *echei* could mean "embody". At 1075b10, philosophers who postulate a first principle such that the Good becomes extraneous to its nature - Anaxagoras and the like - are criticised by Aristotle for failing to see that "the art of medicine is, in some sense, health". This analogy implies that the Good is efficacious. From these texts, a probable conclusion is possible; namely, that Aristotle may have conceived God as bringing about the order of the cosmos primarily as the object of the world's desire and secondarily as a regulative, i.e., efficient, force; but this efficient aspect need not be God's essential nature but the aspect connecting "him" to the cosmos, if indeed 'all things have by nature something divine in them' (*NE* 1153b32). Presumably, an efficient aspect of God explains how the first mover engenders circular and rotary motion of the first heaven, which is a part of nature. However, given Aristotle's conception of efficient causality, and of his insistence that God is pure actuality and absolute perfection, this probable conclusion is in need of

further justification

Now the first mover exercises its causality through being loved or desired. Since in the text (1072a26-b3) volition presupposes thought, the heavenly bodies moved by the first mover are most probably ensouled,[123] especially because they are gods. But soul is by definition "self-mover" (*de Caelo*, 275b25-26) and, therefore, as the immobile part of the self-moving being it is the primary mover in the order of efficient causality.[124] As self-moving movers, the existence of souls conflicts with the principle that whatever moves is moved by another. Indeed in the *de Caelo*, Aristotle held the Platonic view that self-movement explains the revolutions of the celestial bodies. At any rate, where the body is eternal and deathless, as is the case with the celestial self-movers, the efficient causality required for cosmic motion is thereby eternally guaranteed.[125] And because every sublunar motion is for the sake of a heavenly body (1074a25-31), these bodies too function as final causes. But Aristotle claims that a purely actual first mover, who is pure cognition, is still required.

Since knowledge of anything else includes self-consciousness of the knower, if the sphere souls know the first mover they will thereby know themselves. But there seems to be no clear answer to the question whether their knowledge extends to things below them. Celestial beings have potentiality for locomotion, though

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[123] Aristotle's assertions that the heavens are ensouled may be seen at *de Caelo* 285a29-30; 292a18-21.

[124] *Phy.* 257a32-258a27. Cf. 259a32-b3. On the Platonic background, see *Laws* x, 894b-897c; cf. Aristotle's *Phy.* 265b32-266a2

[125] The continued exercise of the superior efficient causality of heavenly bodies on every sublunar change may be found asserted in *GC.* 336a31-b9, and *Meta.* 1071a13-17

not for alteration or substantial change. Can they have potentiality for the reception of new cognitional forms, since their nature is not complete actuality? The text offers no positive indication that Aristotle assigns it to them. Nor is there a hint about the way in which they know the first mover.

Related to the above is the problem of the scope and direction of God's own knowledge. Does God know the cosmos for Aristotle? The text is at pains to show that the first mover is a knowing of its own self, and that for it to know anything else would mean a change, and a change for the worse. Unlike a human knower, God as pure form does not have the capacity to receive new forms without matter and with them as instruments to issue into new acts of cognition.[126] Because of its complete actuality it is limited to its own form and consequently to cognition of itself alone. But if the first mover is the primary instance of being, would it not, in knowing itself thereby know all secondary instances that exemplify and imitate it? Does it not as a primary instance contain all the perfections that are merely shared by the secondary instances? Early in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle assigns *sophia* to God, i.e., knowledge of first principles. May this not mean that God as an identity of *noēsis* and *noēton* is a unique instance of all first principles? Would not this follow if Aristotle also ridicules Empedocles' supreme God ("most blessed God") for being less wise than the lesser "long-lived gods" because the nature of former categorically excludes one of the first principles, Strife? This problem may be tackled indirectly by exploring again the notion of God as *noēton*. What is meant by the identification of *nous* or *noēsis* and *noēton*?

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[126] On forms as instruments of cognition, see *de An.* 432a1-3, 408b14-15

To begin with, it is noteworthy that the model for Aristotle's conception of the *modus operandi* of the divine intellect is the relation of human reason to its object. Now the ideal of human reason is nothing but the truth, the essence of things expressed in a logical system of forms and relations. If I am right, *noēton* expresses the content of reason. Then, as in Plato, so in Aristotle; *nous* is not an intellect as a faculty, but the insight of absolute truth which comes to man like a revelation. But then the truth, even absolute truth, is not an outer or alien object into correspondence with which a mind brings itself, but rather something internal to reason and expressive of its nature. If *noēton* is the ideal of rational activity, then, in attaining it, reason only realises itself. For *noēton* would be the content of thought which gives consciousness its value and justification. The operation of reason is somewhat equivalent to experienced rational order and organisation of things. In reasoning, therefore, we register an awareness of the existence of thought as existing among other things in certain relations. Consequently, divine intellect would be a supreme kind of awareness of the existence of a definite essence - thought, and rationality in the order of things. From one point of view, this awareness would not be the same as human or personal self-consciousness for the reason that in divine thinking, the self and the not-self, thinking and the content of thought, would be identified. From another point of view, divine self-awareness would be like human experience in one of its fleeting and abortive moments of our thought when we are least aware of the fact of our own reflection. With God the moment would be eternal and complete. But the eternal for us, as for

Aristotle, is that which exists outside time, like the modern laws of nature which express the eternal monotonies, logical sequences and relations pertaining to processes of endless reiteration and temporal successions.

Indeed, the natural laws of science are exemplified in space-time, but their vitality is drawn from a sphere quite outside space-time, from the sphere of logical order and eternal relations. And this is exactly the sphere where the Greeks are inclined to locate divinity. The existence of such a sphere is an expression of our tendency to rise above one and all moments into a world of logical sequences and permanent aspects existing in no one instant, but good for and applicable to all moments. Such a world could be the mind of God. If so its contents, that is, itself, would be a logical content of pure thought. Aristotle's God could therefore be the realisation of the formal conditions, the intelligible order, the absolute truth of things incompletely reasoned out by us, guaranteeing its existence as a fact already there in its completeness, but prior logically to its inadequate embodiment in particular things and its imperfect operation in human reasons.

This reading coheres with much in Aristotle's tripartition of sciences noted earlier. To remind ourselves. Theoretical or speculative sciences - physics, mathematics and theology - were divided on the basis of the scope and class of entities which they deal with. Theology deals with objects which are eternal, immutable and have independent and separable existence. The objects of mathematics are things which have no independent existence except as modifications or numerical properties of material objects. Physics on the other hand, deals with objects

which have no existence separable from matter. Theology is prior to, and has a higher degree of scope than, the other speculative sciences because the divine principles of theology are presupposed by mathematical and physical science. Accordingly, all the movements in the cosmos and their numerability presuppose God as the vital and immaterial source. Theology is thus an account of what it means *to be*, and what relations between things are deducible from the fundamental conditions that they all *are*. It is in this sense that the chief object of theology - that which is called God - is the ultimate presupposition in an account of the cosmos.

I suspect that this is what Aristotle would like to say - if his jibes against Platonic Forms are to be credible. But does he really succeed? I think that, by the force of his own language, he does not. The reading above of *noēton* and the tripartition of science is most probably true. But the tripartition so read, like the construal of *noēton*, largely depends on taking the "separable and independent existence" of the object of theology as "*logically* separable existence". If this were so, "logical" separation would not, on Aristotle's own terms, distinguish the object of theology from those of mathematics and physics. We have seen that Aristotle does distinguish between "conceptual" or "logical" separation and "ontological" or "physical" separation. The object of theology is ontologically separate. Add to this the fact that God's activity is characterised as a self-thinking thinking. How then can or does such a divine reality explain what it means for things *to be*. How is such a God the fundamental condition of things as they *are*? Are we to think of animate and inanimate motions in

the sublunar sphere as species or degrees of self-thinking thinking? And is this necessarily guaranteed by the first mover's existing ontologically separate from the visible cosmos?

Another view of this problem is this. For Aristotle, all forms except the divine form of theoretical reason are forms of sensible particulars. Psychologically speaking, forms of sensible particulars are not pure thought, but are accompanied by imagery. Apart from the particulars in which they inhere and the imagery which gives them content, they are forms of nothing and are void. Their relevance, then, is drawn from a kind of experience which in its turn is relevant only to a material substratum. Hence, they cannot be the appropriate objects of a divine or of any other disembodied, pure intelligence. Hence, insofar as heaven and nature are embodied, God cannot know them. Thus by seeming to completely isolate divine mind from all knowledge, certainly from all knowledge of the phenomenal world, and probably from the logical universe, Aristotle's otherwise acute analytical approach to theology yields, apparently, a religiously emasculated supreme God - who cannot love, desire or care for the universe. Arguably, by identifying God with the Good, Aristotle claims that God is essentially good. And the identification of *noēsis* and *noēton* entails also that love and the object of love, care and the object of care coincide in God. But there are two objections: (i) if *noēton* and *noēsis*, hence loving and being loved coincide in God, it does not follow that the scope of God's love is the universe; and (ii) if volitional states depend upon knowledge as upon a first principle, lack of knowledge of the cosmos will entail absence of love and desire on the part of God, and this will further entail absence of

concern, care and providence for the world.

Elsewhere, however, Aristotle takes God's providence for granted:

> Now he who exercises his intellect and cultivates it seems to be both in the best state and most dear to the gods. For if the gods have any care for human affairs, as they are thought to have, it would be reasonable both that they should delight in that which was most akin to them and that they should reward those who love and honour this most ... And that all these attributes belong most of all to the wise man is manifest. He, therefore, is dearest to the gods. And he who is that will presumably be also the happiest (*NE* 1179a23-32).

Is Aristotle merely reporting a traditional belief, in a hypothetical and impersonal way? If yes, is it not a remarkable coincidence that this tradition coheres with Aristotle's own conception of human reason as the divine element most akin to the gods? Cf. in this regard an earlier passage (1099b11ff.): 'Now if there is any gift of the gods to men, it is reasonable that happiness should be god-given ... inasmuch as it is the best' ... even if not god-given... that which is the prize and end of excellence seems to be the best thing and something god-like and blessed'. I see no serious problem with the possiblity that Aristotle is personally committed to tradition in this context. The real issue is, of course, how divine providence can be the dispensation of the God of *Meta.* xii which, as a self-contained rational activity, has neither knowledge nor volition towards the cosmos from which "he" is ontologically separate. And the account of the heavenly bodies offers no cogent grounds for either asserting or denying relations of these kinds towards sublunar things.

But does God really need to know, hence love or care for the

cosmos? Aristotle can argue that God's knowledge, hence his love of and care for the cosmos is contained in his very existence as the final cause of the heavens and nature. By knowing "himself" God is aware of his own nature as the Good, the first principle and the *telos* of the cosmos, who by eternally caring and loving himself attracts to his goodness, perfection, ideality, supremacy, eternality. If x and y depend on A and A alone for their survival, and for whatever good things they have, A cannot be accused of insensitivity or carelessness even if A is not aware of x and y. But if A has knowledge of himself, he has knowledge of himself as a charitable supporter. Of course all this does not necessitate God as a self-contemplating and ontologically separate reality. What reasons, then, are being given for this apparent peculiarity or novelty of God's character?

Paradoxically, the reasons are not chiefly due to Aristotle's acumen for logical or philosophical analysis. Rather, they are chiefly due to traditional religion. If this were true Aristotle would be more religiously-minded than his philosophical predecessors. Aristotle's logical-philosophical analyses are forged around his four causes and a finite number of conceptual categories: *ousia*, *entelecheia*, *dunamis*, *energeia*, *kinēsis*. *Ousia*, *energeia* and *entelecheia* are primarily attributes or properties of God. But they are, at any rate, shared in by celestial and sublunary things to some degree. So these attributes and properties do not by themselves explain why God is *kechorismenon kai auto kath' hauto* and *hauton noei*. Would this be explained by the fact that God is a final cause? Again, the answer is an emphatic, No. Nothing in Aristotle's corpus suggests

that a final cause must necessarily be a self-thinking thinking and an immaterial, separate and independently existing reality. What remains, then? The evidence points unambiguously to traditional religion.

To begin with, we have seen that God's nature is specified as *Nous* (Reason), which, in Aristotle means pure cognition, a vital state or activity of existence in which *noēsis* and *noēton*, the agent and object of knowledge are identified. Already, this conception of God implies the traditional contrast between God and man: man *has* reason, but man *is not* pure, intelligible and intuitive reason, which is what God is. What reason does Aristotle provide for this contrast? Consider this passage:

> ...For if it (sc. divine Reason) thinks nothing, where is its dignity (*to semnon*)?...And if it thinks, but something else is superior (*kurion*) to it ([i.e., if it depends on something else]) - then since its essence (*ousia*) would not be thinking but a capacity (*dunamis*), it cannot be the best reality (*aristē ousia*)...For change (*metabolē*) would be for the worse (*cheiron*), and this would be already a movement (*kinēsis*). First, then, if it is not thinking (*noēsis*) but a capacity [to think], it would be reasonable to suppose that the continuity of its thinking is wearisome to it. Secondly, something else - the object of thought - would evidently be more precious (*timiōteron*) than *nous*; for both thinking and the act of thinking would belong even to the worst of thoughts. Therefore if this is to be avoided (and it ought...) the act of thinking cannot be the best of things. *Therefore* Reason thinks itself, if it is that which is the best (*kratiston*) (*Meta.* xii 9, 1074b15ff.)

The argument of the passage is roughly this: the essence and dignity of Reason is thinking. But to think is to think either (a) oneself or (b) something else as the object of thought (*noēton*). It is concluded that Reason must think itself. Why is (b) rejected?

Because, we are told, if (b) were true, God's thinking would *depend* on *noēton*, and this dependence would entail that *Nous* is a potential reality. But what is wrong with this? After all, Plato had distinguished between divine, paradigmatic Forms as the fundamental realities which the causality of God as Reason *logically depends* on. Indeed, we might argue that Aristotle has an eternally existing cosmos. And his main point in the quoted passage above is that if the *archē* of the cosmos (*Nous*) were a potential reality, this would imply that the cosmos might never have been. Potentiality, implies materiality, and entails *metabolē* and *kinēsis* (change and alteration). Hence, insofar as there is an eternally existing cosmos, *Nous* must exist independently of the cosmos which is material. But this logical-philosophical reason is not what is given here for specifying the nature of the *archē* of the cosmos as a self-thinking reality. What, if any, reasons are being given?

First, the passage under consideration implies that to separate *noēton* from *noēsis* will be to make the activity of the latter *dependent* on the former. But this is not the final reason. The final reasons are expressed in comparative and superlative terms: "*kurion*" (superior), "*timiōmeron*" (more honourable), "*aristē*" (best), "*kratiston*" (strongest). Note in particular that these terms are neither logical nor analytical, but imply traditional attributions and conditions of divinity. The point of the passage has to do with the consequence *for* God of "his" dependence on *noēta*. First of all such dependence would make *noēton* superior to (*kurion*) and more honourable than (*timiōteron*) *Nous*. It is hard to see how, if my cognition of trees depends on actual, separately existing trees, this makes the trees superior to and

more honourable than me, even if we suppose Aristotle to mean that divine *noēta* is the fundamental ground of all thinking. Consequently, if it were distinct from divine *Nous* as God, it would determine the latter's actuality and, in this sense, would be superior and more honourable than God. Logically and philosophically, there is nothing intrinsically obnoxious about God's actuality being determined by a more fundamental condition, unless the point is that God *qua* God is superior to and more honourable than all other things. In other words, Aristotle cannot be understood as offering "*kurion*" and "*timiōteron*" as logical or philosophical reasons. "*Kurion*" simply implies the religious contrast between the causal supremacy of God over all other things, while "*timiōteron*" likewise implies the comparative honour religiously attributed to God in contrast to any attributable to human and other agents. Xenophanes, we remember criticised traditional thought which understood gods to be causal powers and then also believed, inconsistently, that the gods were born. Again cf. Xenophanes: "For this is what a God and a God's capacity is - to have power and not to be in someone's power, and *to be the most powerful of all.* Hence, insofar as it is not more powerful, to that extent it is not God' (*MXG* = 28). Aristotle could be seen in this polemic light. For if God is superior to and most honourable than all other things, then, logical consistency requires that God cannot be seen to *depend* on something else to realise "his" supremacy and honour. Here would be a polemic against Platonic theology and also against traditional religion in which Fate often represents the delimitations of the constitutional powers of the gods including Zeus, the father of gods. Moreover,

there is no suggestion that Aristotle takes *kinēsis* and *metabolē* to be bad *per se*; only that they are conditions which would be worse (*cheiron*) *for* God to be in: potentiality is of contraries, so if God were in *kinēsis* or *metabolē* "he" would think now good now bad. Again, the point is to substantiate the traditional assumption that God is good, and to claim that God is essentially good. Plato in the *Republic* (379ff.) argued for the essential goodness of the gods, against the traditional or Homeric representation which was logically compatible with seeing the gods as not essentially good. Thus to substantiate the traditional assumption that God is good, Aristotle needs to show that, given God's nature as pure thinking, God thinks only the good; and that this is so because God exists beyond the conditions of evil, viz, *kinēsis* and *metabolē*. Again, dependence on rather than identity with *noēton* would not make *Nous* the best or strongest (*aristē*, *kratiston*) reality. Once more Aristotle is anxious to substantiate the supremacy of God. Note the inferential; 'Therefore Reason thinks itself, if it is the best' (or strongest, *kratiston*). Furthermore, such dependence would make the continuity of *Nous*' thinking wearisome (*epiponon*). Here too it is clear that a religious contrast between the life of God and that of man is implied. To substantiate the traditional belief that the gods live blessed lives free of toil and fatigue, Aristotle has to establish the supreme God as *archē* beyond the vicissitudes of material life, which is the lot of human life.

So the final reasons offered for choosing between the alternative theses - either God thinks "himself" or thinks something else - are that by choosing the first alternative, we are able to substantiate

our assumptions that God is the best living reality, the most honourable, and the most supreme of causes whose activity is, in contrast to other agents, unwearied.[127] These reasons are neither logical nor philosophical, but religious. They establish, for the conception of God, a set of traditional conditions and attributions of divinity - supremacy, perfection or ideality, self-sufficiency, honour, and unweariness. Do these conditions and attributes constitute the fundamental reasons why God exists separately and independently of the cosmos, and thinks nothing but itself? I venture to say, Yes: given (i) God's essence as a thinking reality (an essence which it shares with Plato's God), (ii) certain doctrinal assumptions about matter - assumptions, themselves Platonic, and derive from Orphic-Pythagorean religion - that matter is a principle or condition of corruption, contingency, evil (i.e., destruction, for Aristotle), and (iii) the traditional religious conditions and attributions of divine reality, we can derive God as a (a) self-thinking and (b) transcendent reality. Just assume (i) and (ii). Conjoin these with (iiia) God as self-sufficient. It follows that God's thinking cannot be seen to *depend* on anything else; for *dependence* entails lack of (iiia) self-sufficiency (iiib) supremacy, (iiic) perfection or ideality, and if that on which God depends is matter, then, lack of (iiib-iiic) in turn will entail a divine life which (iiid) is laboured, (iiie) lacks honour, (iiie) lacks eternality.[128] Thus to satisfy these conditions and attributes of

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127 Cf.: 'So too in its discussions concerning the divine, whatever is primary and supreme, is necessarily unchangeable. This fact confirms what we have said. For there is nothing else stronger than it to move it - since that would be more divine - and it has no defect and lacks none of its proper excellences' (*de Caelo* 279a30-34).

128 It would seem that "eternality" is not decisive here since the existential status of celestial and primary bodies share in it. But the point is rather

divinity, God must exist separately from the material cosmos and think itself only. Therefore, the ultimate grounds for Aristotle's ontological separation of God from the cosmos, and for specifying its thinking activity as self-thinking, are religious. From this point of view, he has carried further than any before him, the basic religious assumptions which determine the conception of God, although the process of carrying this out has led to a God whose causal relation to the cosmos is, arguably, religiously problematic.

Religion grounded in such a God may well be Aristotle's version of Socratic *philo-sophia*. *Sophia* for Aristotle is a divine activity constituted by the scientific and intuitive apprehension of God or divine first principles: 'of all forms of knowledge *sophia* is the most divine (*theiotatē*), and the most honourable' (*timiōtatē*, *Meta*. 983a5; cf. *NE* 1141b3). *Sophia* involves cognitive activity in which by grasping divine first principles we grasp our own essential self - a theme intimated in Socrates and fully developed in Plato. It is in *sophia* that our capacity for a taste of divine life is realised. Accordingly, *sophia* is the activity which represents the fullest realisation of life, and is constitutive of divine *eudaimonia*. But if *sophia* is activity in love of God's self-knowledge, perfection, eternality, etc., it would seem to require a highly intellectual form of life. Somewhat like the Socratic man, the life of the Aristotelian man is sufficiently fulfilled in the full actualisations of those of his species-defining properties and capacities which exist for him *qua* man. In this, *phronēsis* is required. But *qua* rational participant in the divine, the life of the Aristotelian man must culminate in the highly intellectualised

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that matter is the principle or condition of contingency. Hence dependence on matter will affect the eternality of divine life.

theoretical reason (*NE* 1166a17, 1168b29ff., 1178a2-8: cf. 1178a9ff.). Since piety has to do with the divine, and *sophia* is divine activity which is cognitive of divine first principles, Aristotelian piety, as represented in the *Ethics* and *Metaphysics*, is a highly intellectualised activity. For a philosopher who equals Heraclitus in making activity the central feature of a life well-lived, Aristotle goes one step beyond Socrates and Plato in not making practical actions an essential ingredient in philosophical religion: for *phronēsis* does not necessitate *sophia*. Once more, Aristotle, while surpassing his philosophical predecessors in the traditional religious grounding of his God as a self-thinking thinking who exists independently of the cosmos, has endorsed by this grounding, a religion which surpasses theirs in its intellectual asceticism. But here too, the operative assumption is Aristotle's sensitive appreciation of the religiously perceived disparity between the capacities of man and the properties of God, and the belief that politics and ethics are not features of divine life.

Let us summarise the results of our investigations in the next and concluding chapter.

SIX

CONCLUSION: ARISTOTLE AND HIS PREDECESSORS

We started off with a two-fold aim. The first was to see how Aristotle stands in relation to his predecessors on theology, given his conception of god as, *inter alia*, a final cause who moves as an object of desire, a self-thinking thinking who is ontologically distinct from the cosmos. The second was to see whether the reading which presumes a division of Presocratic thought into science and philosophy on the one hand, and religion or theology on the other, is justified, given the frequent recurrence of the word "god" in Presocratic thought. We saw that the common issue in our two-fold aim was the conception of god: for, to achieve our first aim, it was necessary to elucidate the concept of god as it occurs in pre-Aristotelian thought, but to do so also enables us to see whether a religious or theological sense of "god" is what occurs in the pre-Aristotelian systems. And this in turn would illuminate both the question of whether the non-theological reading of Presocratic philosophy is true or false, and how Aristotle's apparently peculiar conception of God stands in relation to preceding thought. The whole issue refers us back to how "god" was conceived in traditional religion. This was the subject of preliminary investigation in our introductory chapter. The result was that in Greek religious culture, there was an operative model of explanation according to which a phenomenon or the universe as a whole was deemed to be adequately accounted for when its divine origin or cause was specified or traced as that which was

ultimately presupposed in that account.

The divine reality which was thus presupposed was a causal and /or originating power whose form ranged from physical and psychic power or force to causally effective conditions; and a reality was god or divine if it satisfied a set of basic conditions of divinity: self-sufficiency, supremacy, immortality and perfection or ideality. These conditions primarily imply a contrast to the dependency, finitude and imperfection of human life. *A fortiori*, they imply that god or the divine is a living reality. Hence, the general but by no means universal personification of these causal powers. The conception of god outlined above was *basic* to Greek polytheism, and so contains the conceptual or intellectual core of religious piety. This *conceptual core* does not entail (i) that god, although a living power, be anthropomorphic or (ii) that god be morally or emotionally appealing or (iii) that god be actually worshipped - although, no doubt, (i)-(iii) would count as determinants of a cultic god. Nor does it entail (iv) that god be material or immaterial or (v) that god be a specific kind of cause - material, efficient, formal or final. Consequently, any account of the universe or a feature of the universe which derives the existence of a causal reality as that which is ultimately presupposed, would be religious and theological, provided this reality satisfies the conditions of divinity.

We then entered on an exegeses of pre-Aristotelian philosophies. Beginning with the Presocratics, we saw that there was a universal tendency to argue to the necessary existence of a causal and/or originating power - a divine-*archē* often called god, as that which is ultimately presupposed in what is apparently

deemed an adequate account of the universe often conceived as a cosmos. The *archē* was a motion-god, in the sense that its function was always expressed in terms of motion which was presumed to imply life. Consequently, there was an increasing tendency towards specifying divine causality as rational motion. This culminated in the Anaxagorean postulate of a pure self-ruling Reason who governs the cosmos by motion. Generally, divine motion was regular, predicable, measurable or teleological. From the logical and existential points of view, there was little doubt that an *archē* was assumed to be causally superior to all things, eternal, perfect and (at least, logically) self-sufficient, i.e., the *archē* did not depend on anything else for its existence. The apparent exception, the Eleatic or Melissean philosophy of Being, was not concerned with how the cosmos came to be or with how an *archē* functions, but with the conditions which an *archē* qua *archē* must satisfy. The numerous conditions recognised by Parmenides, and to a lesser extent by Melissus, are the same as those in which Xenophanes had conceived his God, and are all subsumable under the set of basic conditions of divinity we have identified. Thus, generally speaking, the Presocratic thought-systems are, by any reading, a series of rational theologies: they contain the model of explanation continuous with traditional religious thought, namely, that of accounting for the universe as a whole by specifying or tracing its underlying divine cause or origin. Consequently, our second aim may be achieved; for we can now say that the reading of Presocratic thought which presumes it to be neatly divisible into philosophy and science on the one hand, and religion or theology on the other, is neither justified not true.

To characterise the Presocratic philosophies as religious and

theological is to emphasise their continuity but not to claim their identity with traditional religious thought. Theologically, the Presocratic systems are arguments to the necessary existence of a reality whose nature contains the *conceptual core* of god as conceived in traditional religion, i.e., as causal and/or originating power. Since the basis of this theology is the *recognition* and *maintenance* of the conceptual core of god as traditionally conceived, religious piety is thus retained. Yet the piety of philosophical theology is not exactly the same as in traditional religion. For philosophical theology involves a different *mode of cognition*: there is a movement from god as mythologically (*muthikōs*) conceived to god as rationally (*logikōs*) conceived, with the consequence that while this latter conception recognises and maintains the conceptual core of the gods of traditional religion and mythology, it does so by jettisoning much that had traditionally counted as relevant in the conception of god. This *logos*-approach to theology reflects a mental development that had outgrown simple faith and had begun to feel the necessity of understanding the essence of what it believes. It entails a distinctive, if you like, an advanced kind of religion in which rationality becomes a key ingredient in piety. Intellectually, this contrasts with the traditional piety of uncritical, submissive reverence and recognition of the gods and what they sanction.

Among the Presocratics, Xenophanes is the most expressive representative of this rational (*logikos*) theology and the *rational* piety it entails: 'For this is what a god and a god's capacity is - to have power and not to be in someone's power, and to be the most powerful of all' (A28); 'those who assert that the

gods are born are as impious as those who say that they die' (A12). As in the religious tradition, so in philosophy; god is *basically* a causal power. If so, impiety follows from any other conception of god which is logically inconsistent with and/or contradictory of this basic meaning of god. A causal power *per se* cannot be said to be born or die. Consequently, to the extent that tradition conceives of god as a causal power and also as born, it is confused, inconsistent or contradictory, and its devotees hold impious thoughts. God is that power which 'shakes all things by the will of "his" mind' (frr. 25, 26). This God, Xenophanes urges mankind to 'praise in hymns with pious myths and pure words' (B1). Here is religious consciousness returned upon itself; a degree of rationality has been introduced into theology and religion.

If Plato's middle and late dialogues represent the culmination of the *rational*, cosmological theology introduced by the Presocratics, his early dialogues, namely, Socratic philosophy, culminates in *rational* piety. The primary concern of Socratic philosophy was with how to live the best life. But at the background of this philosophy was a new wave of rationalism which reached its acme in the fifth century. Partly representing this is the so-called Sophistic Movement, whose orientation implies that it saw, in certain areas at least, clear limits to the power of human reason: if the Presocratics thought that human reason could reach beyond the epistemologically dark recesses of space and time to the luminous realm of the divine *archē* of all things, some Sophists and others were, at least, sceptical about this. Protagorean agnosticism or humanistic aphorism - Man is

the Measure of all things - may well express a mood widely shared by the 5th century intelligentsia. Sophistic thought refocused the speculative energies of human reason away from cosmology, gods and all, to the immediate, practical, personal and relative historical and cultural circumstances in which human life or society finds itself and in which its own well-being was deemed to lie. This anthropocentric wave of rationalism involves a high revaluation of and dependence on human rather than divine resource in connection with individual or social well-being. To an extent, this was a revival of the Homeric life, according to which the good life, the life of the *agathos*, in its rich intensity and variety, was guaranteed by the professional pursuit of *aretē*, the exercise of power and skill (largely military at this time) in achieving and maintaining personal status, honour and the material goods of life, under socio-religious constraints like justice, temperance, prudence, and piety. The portrait of the 5th century *agathos*, however, is unlike the Homeric man: the existence of the traditional gods having been subjected to rational scepticism at this time, the reins of socio-religious constraints of *aretē* have been set loose. That raw competitive power and skill constitutes *aretē* for the *agathos* at this time is manifest in Athen's imperial attitude towards members of her empire, in Thrasymachus' thesis that justice is the interest of the stronger (*Republic*), and in Callicles' view that to do injustice is more honourable than to suffer it (*Gorgias*).

In Plato's early dialogues, Socrates is represented as practising philosophy in the form of dialectics of the kind which contains not only a revision of traditional religion but also a critique of Sophistic rationalism, and depends on a real distinction between,

but not a separation of, soul and body (*Gorgias*, *Charmides*, *Crito*). On the one hand, Socratic dialectics implies that the system of beliefs sustained by the traditional myths and relied on by conservatives like Euthyphro will not remain the same under rational scrutiny. On the other hand, and against the Sophists, he argues that a more perceptive attention to human life, specifically to the obvious patterns of moral behaviour - physical or verbal - intimates a deeper structure of reality and human nature: dialectics points to forms as the fundamental realities *in* and *of* things (*Euthyphro*); human behaviour is motivated by a desire for a final goal, the good of life (*Lysis*, *Gorgias*), identified with *eudaimonia* (*Gorgias*, *Euthydemus*); *and* intimates an essential connection between *eudaimonia* and *aretē*, to the extent that *aretē* is, at least, necessary for *eudaimonia* (*Gorgias*). The distinction between body and soul enables Socrates to argue that the good of life is not the same as *physical* pleasure, health, beauty, and strength (*Gorgias*). Hence, *eudaimonia* is not attainable by material goods, however quantitatively unlimited. The good of life is an optimum state - if you like the health of the *self*, the soul (*Gorgias*, *Crito*). Such a state of the soul is characterised by two significant features: (1) it is *sophia* by being cognitive of (ethical) first principles, and (2) it is divine for two reasons: culturally, the ideal, the perfect, the sublime, is divine, and textually, the [key] property of god is *sophia*. Thus god, for Socrates, is the agent who exemplifies *sophia* (moral-philosophical wisdom). Accordingly, divine nature must be characterised by a moral-intellectual perfection consisting in a cognitive relation to first principles. This required perfection

completely rules out arbitrariness, irrationality, and moral perversion from the nature of god.

As in Homer, so in Socrates, the *agathos* is a person who possesses *aretē*. But unlike in Homer, Socratic man is *agathos* whose life is fully guided by *sophia*. And this entails an agent- as opposed to an act- centred approach to being *agathos*: for a Socratic man is not, like a Homeric or traditional man, *agathos* solely by his claims to acts performed; he must also have the intellectual ability to justify such acts with an *elenchtically* irrefutable *logos* of *to agathon*. The basic assumption here is the thesis that *to be* [say, pious] *is to know* [piety]: thus Nicias' inability to give a dialectically irrefutable account of courage casts doubt on his own courage which was otherwise traditionally reputed; Euthyphro supports his self-confident piety by pointing to his impending action against in his own father, and justifies this by adducing the reverent precedent of Zeus' punishment, by castration, of his own father. For Socrates, however, if Euthyphro *is* pious, as he claims to be, he must *know* what piety is. His piety is in doubt because he cannot justify his action by an elenchtically irrefutable *logos* of piety. Thus, if *to be* [say, good] is *to know* [what the good is], and to know is to know forms, then here too, as in Presocratic thought, Socratic forms play the explanatory role envisaged in traditional religious thought, namely, that they are the divine realities which are ultimately presupposed in what is deemed as an adequate account of a feature of the universe, the ethical-religious phenomena.

Against the charge of corrupting the youth and of impiety or atheism, Socrates claims that he is the greatest boon to Athens,

and that he is pious (*Apology*). In this he appeals to his practice of *philosophia* by which he claims to have spent all his life doing service to the god: that of persuading fellow citizens to make *aretē* of the soul rather than the possession of any social or material good their priority in life; and of using *elenchus* as the means of bringing home to fellow Athenians a painful but beneficial awareness of the measure of their ignorance; and the need to pursue *sophia* in its true sense as what they require for the good of life they have been seeking, and for real salvation from evils in this life and the life hereafter, *if* there is a hereafter (*Apology*). According to Socrates, therefore, the pursuit of *sophia* is a religious duty: not only does it constitute service to god but also it is god's order (*Apology*). He implies, therefore, that the life dedicated to the love or acquisition of wisdom (*philosophia*) is religion. This Socratic religion involves some transposition of elements of Olympian and mystery religions: Zeus was believed to exemplify the *agathos* and *sophos* par excellence, and the mystery religions held out the prospect of divine blessedness and *eudaimonia* to their initiates on the basis of the divine affinity of our soul to the gods. But the Socratic religion and theology of *sophia* implies a rejection of the form of religion which seeks spiritual salvation and happiness from its devotees by means of ritual sacrifices and observances, initiation rites, ecstatic carthasis, and so on. The chief criterion of this religion of *sophia* is whether an activity helps to induce *sophia* in us, not whether such an activity is socially or legally approved. Piety may consist in a life dedicated to *sophia* but piety, as a kind of *sophia*, is consummated by embodying it as a state of one's soul. It is in this that we fulfil our duty and service to the gods.

Although there were earlier intimations of this religion of *sophia* in Pythagoras (fr. 87, Wehrli) and Heraclitus (B114), its full elucidation belongs to Plato in his post-Socratic dialogues. Platonic theology and religion are that of Socrates' blown out into cosmic proportions, and incorporates a return to Presocratic cosmology and the conception of divine causality in terms of motion, as well as the Orphic separability of soul from body, and the assignment of *meta*physical status to Forms.

Forms, soul, and body, constitute the three basic factors of Plato's philosophy of religion. The primary bodies constitute the principle or condition of disorderly change, of irrationality, evil, visibility, dispersability, etc. (*Phaedo*, *Timaeus*, *Statesman*, *Epinomis*). Specific Forms derive from the universal Form of the Good. The Forms constitute a system of fundamental divine realities in terms of which an event is *standardly* true or a natural phenomenon is *standardly* orderly, good, beautiful, intelligible, happy, wise, just, equal, cold, etc. (*Phaedo*, *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus*). Thus the conception of Forms is continuous with traditional religious thought; they are divine principles and causes serving as ultimate explanations of the sensible features of the cosmos.

To serve as standards of perfection, Forms must be, *inter alia*, immutable, immaterial, and intelligible. But since that of which Forms are principles and causes is the changing, bodily universe conceived as a cosmos, Plato, in the late dialogues, requires the medial agency of divine Reason whose function, as knower of Forms, is to transmit the standard-establishing properties of Forms into the material cosmos. It does so in its poly-functional

aspects as constructor and regulator. In its constructive function divine Reason is poetically represented as a Craftsman who creates the cosmos by imposing order on the otherwise chaotic and disorderly material elements; in its regulatory function Reason governs the cosmos in the form of soul defined as "motion of Reason" (*Laws*, *Timaeus*, *Statesman*, *Epinomis*). Divine regulation of the cosmos by motion is transmitted through the circular and rotary motions of the stars and planets; these motions in turn account for the *formal* features of phenomenal existence in the sublunar sphere (*Phaedrus*, *Laws*, *Timaeus*, *Epinomis*).

Reason is called God. So too are the countless stars and planets whose rational motions are those of Reason (*Timaeus*). Consequently, Platonic gods are like those of the Presocratics, motion-gods. But unlike those, however, Platonic gods are what they are - their causal supremacy, supreme wisdom, justice, goodness, happiness, blessedness, everlasting life, etc. - in virtue of being imbued with Forms (*Phaedrus*). The triumphant rationality of the celestial god-souls has been explained in two different but not incompatible ways (*Timaeus*, *Epinomis*): (i) that god-souls are a certain mathematical structure of the Forms of Being, Sameness and Difference; (ii) that the celestial environment is of the sort - fiery - which is perfectly conformable to motions of Reason. (i) and (ii) imply corresponding contrasts to human souls who are, to a second degree, a mathematical structure of the same Forms and, in addition, inhabit a more recalcitrant and disorderly environment - the earth. As divine reality is presumed to be alive, so is Reason a living reality and, indeed, the celestial motions of Reason are the highest forms of

life. Accordingly, rotary and circular motions are not merely predictable, regular, orderly, numerable, teleologial, and everlasting, etc; they are said to be supremely good, blessed, happy, wise. And not only do the motions of Reason impart intelligibility, order, goodness, etc., to the cosmos, they also impart care, virtue or justice to the administration the cosmos (*Laws*, *Timaeus*).

The goal of human life is to be (divinely) *eudaimon*. In Plato, this entails that the life of the individual, social or personal, is to be fully governed by reason, i.e., by a soul that knows Forms (*Republic*, *Laws*). This further entails the control of our environment or the freeing of our soul from its earthly influences - the evils, disorderly behaviours, irrationality and violent passions which it engenders. Since the full control or reduction of the influences of one's environment depends on knowledge of the laws and principles which govern it, this means in Plato that our spiritual freedom and happiness depends on Forms in knowing which we become truly or divinely wise (*sophos*). Since a certain order of Forms constitute the internal structure of our souls, this also means that in coming to know Forms, we are at once inuring ourselves to the fundamental principles and causes governing the cosmos and bringing to full self-consciousness our own essential nature (*Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Theaetetus*, *Timaeus*, *Phaedrus*). This is a kind of self-knowledge - call it rational self-knowledge, but it is a mediated self-knowledge; we need the media of *logoi* or theoretical studies to bring to full self-consciousness principles which are already innate in us. On the other hand, God does not need the media of *logoi* or theoretical studies in order to know Forms. This strongly suggests that God's knowledge is *direct*

self-knowledge. Forms are the principles of divine cognition, creativity and care. If we combine this with the strong association of knowing and being which is so visible in Plato, we can reasonably expect Plato to identify God and the Forms. Textually, however, Plato did not take this step. The Platonic corpus warrants an analytical distinction between Forms and Reason.

In the middle dialogues, human *sophia* is attainable by dialectical studies which culminates in the rational vision of the Form of Good. *Sophia* crowns a series of theoretical studies of increasing abstraction and universality (*Phaedo*, *Republic*). In the arguments from motion characteristic of the late dialogues, the pursuit of *sophia* would involve activities which inure us to the principles governing the rational convolutions of the celestial motions. Here, astronomical studies (*Epinomis*), but also institutionalised drinking, dancing and other festivities (*Laws*), are legitimate ways of inducing *sophia* in our souls - provided these activities are organised in the basis of quantitative and other principles corresponding to those that govern the cosmos and the soul. Even the passive obedience of reason in the form of laws enacted by wise legislators, has the same effect of inducing *sophia* in us (*Laws*, *Statesman*). These moral-intellectual ways of organising our lives individually or socially may save our souls, on the dissolution of our bodies (death), from becoming lower forms of life in a long round of transmigrations until redeemed by the ministrations of the stars (*Laws*, *Timaeus*).

How does Aristotle's philosophy of religion stand in relation to his predecessors? My discussion of Aristotle tried to place his theology in a historical perspective. But by concentrating on the

Metaphysics, my task has been less than a thorough-going anatomy of the impact which preceding thought had on Aristotle. So far, we have grounds for saying that the basic and most significant elements and assumptions of Aristotle's theology may be traced to preceding thought, with minor qualifications. Throughout his work Aristotle leaves no doubt that he is working in direct response to issues broached by his predessors. He customarily discusses major philosophical issues with a historical survey of the state of knowledge reached by his predecessors. He then proceeds on his own after subjecting the historical state of knowledge to a critique, from which he argues to establish his own theses. (Book one of the *Metaphysics* is a clear example).

Generally, Aristotle adopts, adapts, rejects or ignores tradition in the light of reason and of his own doctrines. For example, he takes it for granted that the traditional gods should be worshipped (*Top.* 105a5), although elsewhere he rejects by implication the traditional representation of the gods. Similarly, he rejects Hesiod's conception of gods (*Meta.* 1000a9; cf. *Pol.* 1252b24; *NE* 1177b31). In *de Motu An.*, 699b35, he adopts a passage from the *Iliad* to illustrate his unmoved mover but ignores the fact that Zeus sometimes moves from Mt Olympus to Mt. Ida. In *Meta* xii, while Aristotle praises the ancients for naively intuiting that the unmoved movers are gods, he criticises tradition for anthropomorphising god (1074a38). In *Meta* xii 10, he quotes *Iliad* ii, 204 to confirm his logical and moral conclusion that there must be a unique first cause (*archē*) of all things if an infinite regress is to be avoided: "The rule of the many is not good; let there be one ruler". Again, Aristotle, in the *Metaphysics*,

takes the religious tradition for granted: god is a cause and a principle, a living reality who exists eternally, and is supreme, self-sufficient, ideal or perfect and most honourable. These conditions and attributions of divinity may be logically functional, but they are primarily traditional religious assumptions or doctrines implying a contrast to the limitations and conditions of human existence. Aristotle also takes for granted the traditional religious model of explanation, according to which the universe or a feature of the universe is deemed to be adequately accounted for when its divine origin or cause is traced or specified. Thus he derives divine Reason as that which is ultimately presupposed in what he obviously deemed an adequate account of the universe perceived as a cosmos. And in his tripartite division of theoretical sciences, theology emerges as the most honourable and the highest, and its objects are the most universal, in the sense that they constitute the fundamental principles ultimately presupposed in any (scientific) study.

With his philosophical predecessors, Aristotle is also in tune regarding the causality of God as a form of motion, and the specification of divine nature as pure Reason. The concept of god as a principle of motion is, on Plato's reading, intimated in Homer's Okeanus (*Theaetetus*, 152e), while the concept of divine causality as motion was first put to philosophical account of the cosmos by Thales. Divine causality as *rational* motion is intimated in the Presocratic systems. Aristotle quotes the *Iliad* to illustrate his idea of God as an umoved mover, and he must be aware of Xenophanes' God who, abiding the same moves the cosmos by "his" *mind*. The tripartite structure, if not also the content, of Aristotle's account of the cosmos is an adaptation of Plato's: the

most fundamental reality in Aristotle is divine Reason (*nous*) or Thinking (*noēsis*) who is an identity of *noēsis* and *noēton* (here he combines Plato's *Nous* and Forms as the *noēta* of *Nous*); by the agency of Reason circular and rotary motions are engendered in the astronomical sphere (as in Plato); from the celestial motions derive all *phenomenal* features of the cosmos (as in Plato). In both philosophies, the supreme rationality and eternality or everlastingness of rotary and circular motions confirm the traditional attribution of divinity to the astronomical sphere, and the belief that its inhabitants are gods. Traditional polytheism is thus substantiated but in a transposed form. The biblical tradition revolts against the sharing of the godhead by any other individuals or things. But the Greek mind represented deity quite differently. "God", we can now believe, was a predicative notion that was asserted of a causal power as an explanatory reality. But if one needs many causal powers to account for the existence of the universe, there will be as many gods.

But there are *apparently* Aristotelian novelties and peculiarities. Three of these motivated this thesis, namely, that Aristotle's godhead, Reason, is a thinking who thinks nothing but "himself", who exists separately and independently of the visible cosmos and is a final cause whose function is denoted by motion of the type associated with an object of love or desire. Are these merely apparent *or* real novelties and peculiarities? I have answered that they are merely apparent. In reality they are firmly grounded in or are adaptations of preceding thought.

In *Meta.* xii, Aristotle's reasons for conceiving God as a self-thinking reality who thinks nothing but "himself" is that, were

"he" to think of something else outside "himself", were divine *noēta* distinct from divine *noēsis*, the former would determine the essence of God's thinking insofar as *noēta* would be the condition for the actualisation of God's thinking. This would also imply that God is not a *pure* self-fulfilling activity (*energeia*) or an actuality (*entelecheia*) but a mere potentiality or capacity (*dunamis*) to think. But by being a potentiality God would be subject to change (*kinēsis*) and alteration (*metabolē*), and would therefore change into or think now good now bad. But what is philosophically or logically wrong if God's thinking has to be determined by a distinctly existing *noēta*? After all - I have pointed to this fact - the activity of Plato's supreme God *presupposes* the existence of Forms. Fortunately, Aristotle does offer reasons. He does not make avoidance of the state or condition of being a *dunamis* or being in *kinēsis* and *metabolē* the final reasons why God must think itself only. Rather, he argues that the state or condition of *dunamis*, *kinēsis* and *metabolē* is worse (*cheiron*) *for* God, for it would make God's life wearisome (*epiponon*), and God would think now good and now bad. In other words, the final reasons derive from certain assumptions or doctrines about God *qua* God. And what are these? They are that God *qua* God must be (a) unchanging in "his" nature, must have (b) an unwearied life, and must (c) intrinsically think good things only. As our discussions of preceding thought (e.g. Plato) has shown, changelessness of nature, and intrinsic goodness are associated with perfection and ideality, and this implies a metaphysical or religious contrast of divine and other realities; while living an unwearied life implies

the traditional religious contrast between, on the one hand, the imperfect life of man *and* the perfect life of God. Aristotle offers another set of reasons why God must think itself only: were God to think of something else, that other thing would be *superior* (*kurion*) to and more honourable than (*timiōmeron*) "him", and divine Reason would not be the best (*aristē*) or the strongest (*kratiston*) reality. Aristotle's words are well-chosen: they are neither logical nor analytical. "*Kurion*", "*timiōmeron*", "*aristē*", "*kratiston*", imply the traditional religious conditions or attributions of God: that God must be causally superior to, and more honourable than, all else. Additionally, God must simply be the best, strongest or the most perfect and self-sufficient of realities - which would not be the case were God's thinking to *depend* on externally existing *noēta*. So the final reasons which ground Aristotle's conception of God as self-thinking are traditional religious doctrines rather than logical or philosophical ones. Aristotle appears to be applying traditional tenets about God more consistently.

What about God's status as a reality existing separately and independently of the visible cosmos? Again, the operative reasons derive (a) from the same doctrines of traditional religion as those above, namely, that God must be perfect, eternal or everlasting, self-sufficient, (causally) supreme, most honourable, etc. *and* (b) some doctrinal assumptions about matter or body. These assumptions are Platonic and religious; they ultimately derive from Orphic or Pythagorean religious beliefs. These are that matter is, *inter alia*, a principle or condition of corruption, change or alteration, contingency, imperfection and evil (destruction, for Aristotle). Given (a) and (b), God's intrinsic

nature as a causally supreme, eternal, perfect, self-sufficient existent, would be corrupted, changed or altered, if, as a thinking reality, the scope of "his" activities extended to material forms or just any material reality. Hence, to keep God above the vicissitudes of mortality and contingency involves establishing God's existential status *meta*physically. Therefore, God cannot be part of the visible cosmos. Plato's way out of this dilemma of keeping the divine perfection and ideality of God intact while maintaining its essential function as a first cause is to make a number of analytical and analogical moves. Analytically, pure, divine Reason is a knower of Forms. This retains the traditional doctrine that God is a supremely wise being. But God is also, traditionally, a causal power. So in a second step, the causal power of God is represented as regulatory and constructive. In its regulatory function, Reason governs the cosmos in the form of Soul. Analytically Soul is defined as motion of Reason. Then also Plato projects a craftsman image of Reason as God. In the *Timaeus*, this analogical projection of the constructive function of God combines with the regulatory function. The argument seems to be that any plausible account of the universe will conclude to the necessary existence of a first cause who is an agent imbued with Forms and whose causality is constructive mobility, *like* that of a craftsman. Since, for Plato, what makes an agent divinely wise, good, blessed, etc., is his knowledge of or association with Forms, neither his analytical nor analogical move jeopardises God's intrinsic ideality and perfection. Aristotle, however, does not avail himself of any of these moves. He Keeps God clear of the visible cosmos in order to guarantee God's intrinsic perfection and

ideality.

At first the specification of God's causality as solely final would seem to determine God's ontological distinction from the cosmos; for an object of love and desire is sufficiently distinct from that which desires and loves it. However, nothing in Aristotle's own construal of final causality in the *corpus* implies that it necessitates ontological separation of that which bears it. Furthermore, as Plato's cosmology shows, safeguarding God's intrinsic perfection, self-sufficiency, etc., does not necessarily entail God's causality as purely and solely final. Accordingly, some other reason must be found. The text provides the reason, which shows an Aristotelian adaptation of Plato.

In *Meta.* xii, Aristotle criticises those who postulate a first cause or principle in relation to which *the Good* or the Beautiful (*to kalon*) is extraneous. In response to what he considers a mistake, he identifies the Good with his first principle (1072a28ff.), Reason. But in the *Gorgias*, *Republic*, and *Phaedrus*, Plato implies that the Good or the Beautiful is, by definition, an object of *final* desire; it is that which every action, movement or desire anticipates from the very start. Hence, it is a final cause. Since Forms are the fundamental causes in Plato's system, and the Good or the Beautiful in the *Republic* or *Phaedrus* is a (universal) Form, it follows that the function of all things is to desire the Good or the Beautiful. Thus the *Phaedo* (75a2) claims that sensible things are desiring or yearning (*oregetai*) to be like their intelligible, paradigmatic counterparts, namely, the Forms. Perhaps, Plato is using "*orexis*" in a different sense from that of Aristotle. For in *Meta.* xii (though not in the *de Anima*) desire

presupposes or depends on thought. But Plato's Forms are not characterised as thoughts, though they would be thus characterised were Forms and Reason identical. Possibly too, "*orexis*" in both philosophers is metaphorical. But there is no sufficient indication in the text for such a figurative use. However that may be, the postulation of *the Good* as a first principle or as an aspect of the first principle inclines one to the view that if the Good is conceived causally, it does cause at least as an object of desire. In the *Timaeus*, which is normally classified as a late dialogue, Plato does not characterise Forms as objects of desire, though this is implied in his Form-sensible participation thesis. In the late dialogues, the middle period emphasis on the statics of Forms - their eternality, unchangeability, uniformity, incompositeness, self-identity - are translated, in cosmologies, into the dynamics of rational motion, which accounts for all sublunary motions which in turn explain all phenomenal features of the cosmos. Thus whatever intelligibility, order and goodness there is in phenomena are traceable to intelligible, paradigmatic divine Forms. In this sense, Plato can say that it is in virtue of desiring the perfections of the paradigmatic Forms that phenomena exist. Correspondingly, the function of life is, for Plato, to attain to the divine state of god, and this necessarily involves desiring god's perfection, wisdom, happiness, etc. Indeed, in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, Plato argues that the soul is innately desirous of the Good or the Beautiful.

Nevertheless, to say categorically that all things in the cosmos are moved by God as an object of desire, may be said to be a distinctive move. Not least because in Plato divine causality is indistinctly final and efficient. On the other hand, Aristotle's

exclusive specification God's causality as final denoted as erotic attraction is supportive of his consistent substantiation of God's perfection, self-sufficiency, and so on. For, by being exclusively an object of desire and love, God's thinking, hence "his" love or desire (since volition follows thought) is set free for itself and from the imperfections of the cosmos.

It follows from this that God does not love or care for anything else beyond itself. But for a God fully conceived in the doctrines of traditional religion, this is apparently paradoxical. Aristotle should be seen as arguing thus: God is [intrinsically] e.g., self-sufficient. God is a Thinking or Reason. Volition depends on thought. To think, hence to desire or love anything other than oneself entails *dependence* on that other for the realisation of one's thinking. Therefore God thinks, hence desires or loves "himself" only. Therefore God does not love the cosmos. The traditional grounds on which God was conceived would seem to be carried to religiously unacceptable limits. But the paradox of a carelessly selfish God who has been conceived in the doctrines of traditional religion may be dissolved. I have argued to the effect that Aristotle's God cannot legitimately be accused of careless insensitivity or selfishness. For God really does not need to know or look back on the cosmos. All "he" needs do is to contemplate and love "himself" only. For it is in virtue of "his" eternal self-knowing and self-loving that whatever goodness, intelligibility order, food, etc. there is in the cosmos are eternally available to all who depend on "him". Were God to depart from "his" essential nature, chaos, disorder, and all motion, hence all phenomenal existence would cease to exist. And God, by knowing "himself"

knows "himself" as a first principle who attracts to his perfection, self-sufficiency, essential goodness, etc., and that "he" does so in "his" essential self-thinking and self-loving nature. Whether or not something else is actually attracted to "him" "he" does not need to know. But God knows, cares for and loves the cosmos just by knowing, caring and loving "himself"; God's knowledge, love or care of the cosmos is contained in his self-knowledge, self-love and self-care. And if we were to ignore the catastrophic consequence which would follow from God's having to undergo the least change of "his" essential nature, Aristotle can argue, like Plato, that the cosmos is as perfect and as good and orderly as its nature would admit. Consequently, the state of the cosmos would not be enhanced a jot just by being known and loved by God. And how can I accuse such a God of insensitivity, carelessness or selfishness; why should I worry to be known by "him" on whose very exclusive self-knowledge I depend for all the good things I could ever possibly expect from "him" if "he" were to know me?

But if God is pure Reason or pure Thinking, and moves the cosmos solely as an object of love or desire, religion based on such a God would presumably be a version of the Socratic religion of *philo-sophia*. For all things must desire God's pure thinking or, proximately, the highly rational activity of the first heaven. Presumably different things would desire different aspects of God's nature; for example, the primary bodies may desire the eternality of God or the first heaven, while man, because he and he alone is rational among animate things, desires also God's self-sufficiency, honour, supremacy and self-knowledge, and concommitantly, God's happiness and pleasure. Since to desire

God's perfection involves being like "him" as pure Thinking, it is inevitable that this will entail a highly intellectualist conception of religion. In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle reckons (*prōtē*) *philosophia* or *sophia* as divine activity. For it consists in activity or wisdom that properly belongs to God, though it is intimated that we may share in it. It is the most divine (*theiotatē*) and most precious (*timiōtatē*) form of knowledge. Its objects are divine first principles (*Meta.* 983a). However, if God's knowledge is direct self-knowledge where *noēsis* and *noēta* are identified, at least two things follow. First, as activity cognitive of divine first principles, *sophia* would involve a kind of self-knowledge, but this implies that divine first principles constitute an objective counterpart of ourselves, if they are that in virtue of which we come to know ourselves. Plato, we saw, has such a thesis. Secondly, *sophia*, in the strict sense, would be *humanly* unattainable. For strictly *sophia* would seem to require a state of non-bodily existence in which pure reason (*nous*) and its object are identified. But this need not be the case. The celestial gods as gods must be *sophos*, and they are bodily. Thus it is possible to see here an implicit accommodation of degrees of *sophia*. And the *NE* suggests that we are capable of *sophia*, which is specified as the supreme achievement and realisation of our essence as rational beings. Indeed, Aristotle there recognises the difficulty of attaining *sophia* for man. Nevertheless, he urges the possibility of *sophia* by appeal to the presence in us of the divine element - reason: 'we must, *so far as we can*, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live according to the best thing in us... the life according to reason is the best...for, it is not insofar as he is a man that he will live so, but insofar as something divine is present

in him' (*NE* 1177b26ff.; cf. *Theae.* 176a-b). "So far as we can", is supportive of my suggestion of "degrees of *sophia*".

However, according to Aristotle's account of the sciences and remarks about human reason in the *NE*, *sophia* or the contemplation of God does not involve the use of practical wisdom (*phronēsis*). *Phronēsis* grounds knowledge in practical matters like ethics and politics, subject-matters whose first principles are only general laws or highly probable but not universal truths, because they contain elements of contingencies which cannot be universalised. No contemplation of God arises without *sophia* (activity cognitive of divine first principles). Yet there seems to be no essential or necessary connection between *phronēsis* and *sophia*. *Phronēsis* does not necessitate *sophia*. Accordingly, there does not appear to be, for Aristotelian man, a central self to which the practical and contemplative lives may be referred as indistinguishable aspects of a unique, essentially and necessarily continuous life of a person. Unlike Socrates or Plato, Aristotle does not appear to see the practical life as essentially connected with the highest exercise of reason and, hence, with the contemplation of God. The Aristotelian *sophia* would therefore seem to ground a highly intellectualised piety which is ultimately least concerned with day to day life. But here again Aristotle differs from his philosophical predecessors just by being a consistent applier of traditional religious tenets. Traditionally, politics and ethics are not part of divine life (cf. *NE* 1178b8ff.). And *sophia* is standardly a divine activity; it is activity which is God's strictly speaking. But if, as Aristotle believes, we share in *sophia* in virtue of our rational nature, consistency requires that

in *sophia* we are least concerned with politics and ethics. And if *sophia* does not cover ethics, then there is little or no moral dimension in *sophia*. The question then arises: why *ought* we to engage in *sophia* to immortalise ourselves, i.e., have a god-like life? Perhaps the question is wrong. Aristotle makes no moral appeal to *sophia* as does Plato and Socrates. Aristotelian morality consists in a quantitatively measurable action whose basic appeal lies in its humanism: it appeals to the resources available to man *qua* human.

Perhaps one might argue that Aristotelian piety is not as highly intellectualised as it seems, but is the same as Plato's in the late dialogues. Aristotle makes activity central to a life fully lived. Thus he permits religious festivals in his ideal state. And in *Meta.* xii, the circular motions of the celestial gods, while desiring the perfection of divine Reason, constitute the final cause or proximate standard by which sublunar beings may attain to perfection, immortality and divinity. Consequently, Aristotelian piety would consist in those activities - whether it is a properly organised religious festival or what not - which inure our minds to the eternal patterns of the celestial motions. *Sophia* would then be the highest form of piety. But this is speculation. Textually, Aristotle is not forthcoming: those propositions which are more accommodating of traditional forms of piety do not form a coherent part of Aristotle's more consistent thoughts on *sophia*.

On the other hand, we have seen that Aristotle's motivation for making God exist in ontological separation from the visible cosmos, a final cause who moves as an object of love or desire, and a self-thinking Reason, derives from (a) the traditional religious

conception of god as a principle of *final* explanation, a supreme causal, (i.e., *living*) power who, in contrast to man, is supremely wise, perfect, enjoys eternal and self-sufficient life and is most honourable; (b) a Platonic (but ultimately Orphic-Pythagorean) conception of matter or body, as a principle or condition of corruption, generation, destruction, contingency, etc.; (c) (adaptation of) elements of Plato's ontology and/or cosmology. By (a)-(c) the most significant elements and assumptions of Aristotle's philosophy of religion are thus fully anticipated in preceding thought, without prejudice to the acute conceptual and analytical distinctions and refinements by which Aristotle transposed these earlier thoughts into his own.

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